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PREFACE

It is human nature, especially while in the prime of youth, to ignore the fact that this world in which we all live is truly an ill-balanced world. Not until one meets with seeming injustice or obstruction in later life does one begin to question why this has happened to him; the compiler of this book is no exception.

Had there been no accident and no injury to the spinal column in B.E. 2480 (1937 A.D.), I would not have had the good fortune to find out the sublimeness of the Teaching of the Lord Buddha from my two *Archāra* (Teachers), to both of whom I am gratefully indebted, not only for my understanding of life as taught by the Buddha, but also for the present condition of mind and body.

One of my *Archāra* was a Buddhist monk, the late Chow Khoon Buddhaviharsobhon, Luang Poh of Wat Wongkong in Ayudhaya (the old capital of Thailand), who passed away in B.E. 2493 (1950 A.D.) at the age of 91. The other is Mr. Kow Kim Lock who, at the age of 89, still comes round to give me regular weekly massage and who has kindly consented to my sharing with fellow-beings some of the subtle points of the Noble Teaching which would otherwise be unknown except to those who have already attained the topmost height in Right meditation.

My original intention was just to record systematically, while still lying indisposed, what I learned from my *Archāra* with notes and quotations which agree with my own view, so that I might later impart it to my two sons;

B

but at the request of friends and relatives who, during the early stage of my invalidation, kindly sent me books on Buddha Dhamma in the Thai as well as English versions to while away the time, I decided to perform merit making as I used to do in previous years on the 25th of May by having copies of my work printed for distribution to them and to others who are interested as well as for the furtherance of learning and knowledge.

Much of the material and many of the expressions contained therein will be found in the works of distinguished Buddhist scholars, particularly in "The Word of the Buddha" compiled, translated and explained by Mahathera Nyanatiloka of Ceylon from which I have borrowed again and again, and in Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia." Consequently I lay no claim to any originality of research or to any special skill in the writing of books.

Also this interpretation of the Buddha's Teaching in its present form might not have been finished if it had not received the co-operation of a friend who willingly found time to read and comment again and again and to assist me in many ways.

Should this condensation of the salient points of the Buddha's doctrine into an integrated whole help to enlighten even a few friends, my efforts will have fulfilled another end as well.

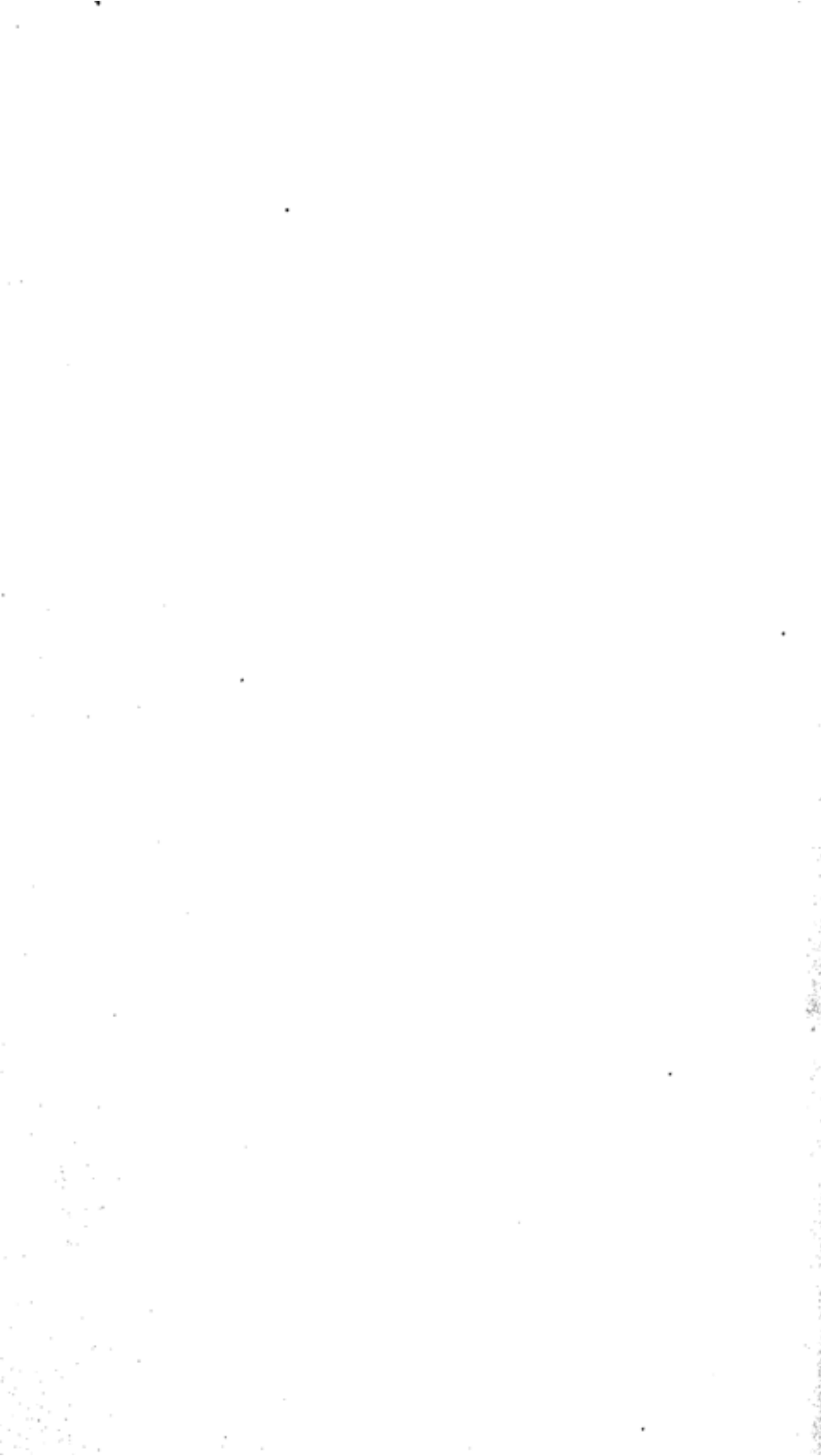
Yong Hoontra Kool

Bangkok, 25 May 1956.

ERRATA

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Page 65	line 13 :	eight	to read	eighth
Page 70	line 27 :	certainly	to read	certainly
Page 79	line 17 :	karmic	to read	kammic
Page 86	line 13 :	<i>nibbāna</i>	to read	<i>Nibbāna</i>
Page 104	line 17 :	Bhikkus	to read	Bhikkhus
Page 105	line 22 :	Bhikkus	to read	Bhikkhus
Page 109	line 22 :	promanent	to read	permanent
Page 161	line 14 :	himself	to read	himself
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Page 224	line 17 :	views life	to read	views of life

Readers will kindly overlook misprints in Pāli words.



CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter I Ways of life in India, 1500-600 B.C. ...	1
Chapter II The life of Gotama, the Buddha	14
Chapter III The first <i>sutta</i> or discourse	23
Chapter IV The Doctrine of <i>Kamma</i>	29
Self-indulgence and peace of mind are enemies	30
Man enjoys free-will within the working of his own <i>kamma</i> , but he has no divine right	32
Man is a self-created being and has to abide by the consequences of his own deeds	34
The Law of <i>kamma</i>	36
<i>Kamma</i> and the science of dynamics ...	39
<i>Kamma</i> is the conditioning agent of rebirth	41
<i>Kamma</i> solves the inequalities in life and explains good and evil	45
True peace and lasting happiness lie within and not without	54
The Middle Way	55
Treading the Noble Eightfold Path ...	58

II

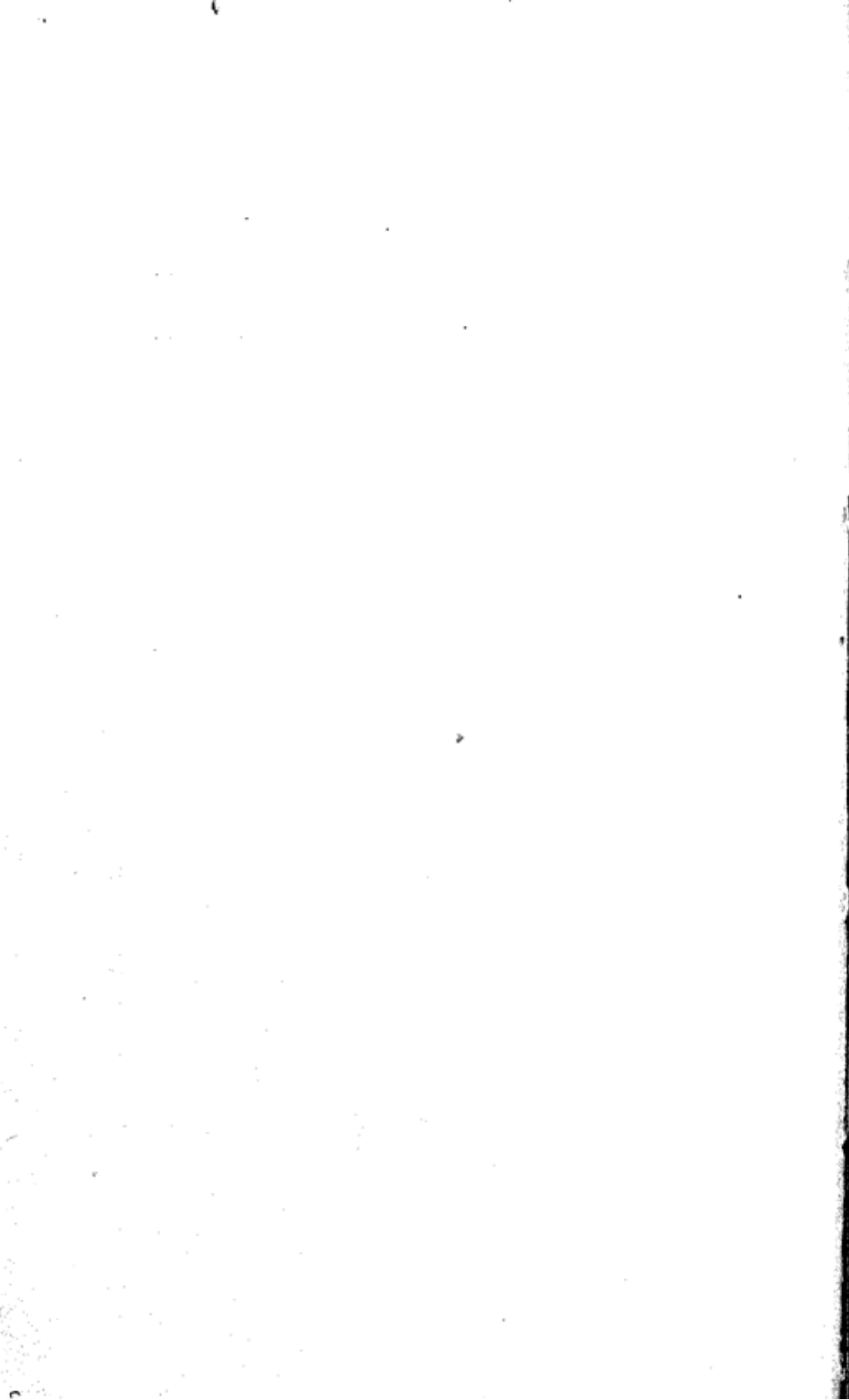
	Page
Chapter V The doctrine of <i>paticcasamuppāda</i>	68
Idle speculations and discussions can never solve the riddles of life	68
The Noble Eightfold Path leads to enlightenment and <i>Nibbāna</i>	71
The law of <i>paticcasamuppāda</i>	74
The Twelve <i>Nidāna</i> or the Wheel of rebirth	79
The <i>khandha</i> or five aggregates of existence	85
The "self", the "ego" and the "soul" are all delusions	96
Human life is the main stage in the universal process	106
Right meditation is the key to the riddles of life	108
Chapter VI The doctrine of <i>Bodhipakkiyadhamma</i> ...	115
Man is only a "body-dweller" (<i>kāyānupassanā-satipatthāna</i>)	115
Senses are illusory (<i>vedanānupassanā-satipatthāna</i>)	124
Thought is the "Moulder of Destiny" (<i>Cittānupassanā-satipatthāna</i>)	129
Wisdom and power are omnipresent (<i>Dhammānupassanā-satipatthāna</i>)	137
"Cleanse the heart" with right effort (<i>Sammāpādhāna</i>)	140
Meditation is the source of magic and revelations (<i>iddhipāda</i>)	145

III

	Page
The five mental qualities indispensable to self-unfoldment (<i>indriya</i>)	162
The five mental powers that make self-unfoldment possible (<i>bala</i>)	168
The seven elements of enlightenment (<i>bodhi-angā</i>)	177
The "Noble Eightfold Path" is "The" Way of Life	183
Chapter VII The doctrine of <i>ariyasacca</i>	197
The First Noble Truth— <i>dukkha-ariyasacca</i>	204
The Second Noble Truth— <i>Dukkha-samudaya-ariyasacca</i>	209
The Third Noble Truth— <i>dukkhanirōdha-ariyasacca</i>	212
The Fourth Noble Truth— <i>dukkha-nirōdha-gāminī-patipadā-ariyasacca</i> ...	216
Chapter VIII Conclusion	218
Appendix 1 <i>Singālovāda Sutta</i>	226
Appendix 2 The <i>Tipitaka</i>	236
Appendix 3 <i>Katha</i>	240



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CHAPTER I

WAYS OF LIFE IN INDIA 1500-600 B.C.

It is an acknowledged fact that history is an indispensable help to the study of every branch of learning, and for this reason the following brief sketch of the ways of life prevailing in India prior to the birth of Gotama, the Buddha, is here appended as an aid to the proper understanding of the Buddha's aim and teaching; but it should be remembered that there are no historical records of that period and all our knowledge must necessarily rest upon the religious documents of pre-buddhistic Hinduism and on references in the Buddhist scriptures.

Since the migration of the Aryans into India about 1500 B.C., Brahminism had become the accepted faith of the Hindus, and the social structure of India was divided into castes or classes, with the priestly caste of Brahmins (teachers) claiming primacy over the rest, viz. the Kshatriyas (the royal, warrior or military class), the Vaiyas (money-lenders, merchants and land-owners) and the Sudras (previous settlers).

Under the caste system, members of the different classes, of which there were four originally, were not allowed to eat or inter-marry with persons of a lower caste under penalty of becoming outcasts or Pariahs (the original natives), and the members of each caste must

therefore hold on to one definite way of living and to one group of associates. Elaborate rituals of worship and sacrifices held sway, and ceremonial negligences and defilements could cause a man to become an outcast. The Brahmins were therefore evidently recognized as raised above the other classes and regarded as divinely appointed teachers of sacred knowledge as well as of ways of life.

Brahminism was originally the belief of the Aryan Hindus in definite personal gods and had, from 1500-600 B.C., passed through various stages of development in the hands of the Brahmin priests. The trend of religious thoughts and beliefs of the Aryan Hindus, like those of other races, may safely be taken to have had its origin, while civilization was still in its infancy, in the primitive population. Men, through guilty conscience and out of human fear of, awe and wonder at the recurring and striking natural phenomena, such as storms, lightning, eclipses, earthquakes, etc., began to regard those phenomena as the manifestations of the wrath of spirits and deities residing in the sky, in the air and on the earth. Those spirits and deities were regarded in the light of personal conscious entities; it follows that although they were endowed with powers beyond those of man, they were not insensitive to the latter's praises and actions, which gave rise to rituals of worship and sacrifices to appease their anger. The unsatisfactory results of those sacrificial rites and ceremonies, charms and incantations, however, at first led to the promotion of two gods to the dignity of co-rulers of human destiny; one residing in heaven, where those possessed of good deeds would go

after death, and the other living in hell, to which place those who preferred evil deeds to good ones would be consigned to be tortured after their earthly life. That concept was followed by that of one imaginary god, behind these individual gods, spirits and deities, as supreme ruler and creator of the universe, i.e. heaven, earth and hell, as well as of man's soul. The latter conception was the result of the development of man's insight through meditation; the universe was thus believed to consist of 14 different worlds, lying one above another: the lowest seven, to accommodate and punish those sinful souls in accordance with the gravity of their evil deeds, were known collectively as hell and were placed under the guardianship of Yama; above those seven worlds of hell came the earth on which men live, and this earth together with the six worlds of angels above it were called heaven, the topmost division of which was conceived to be the residence of Indra, the supreme ruler of both heaven and hell. Later development, however, inspired the conception of "Brahma" as god, the ultimate creator, residing in a distinct, separate and uppermost world of Brahma above those of heaven, i.e. an absolute world pervaded with eternal bliss and hence free from the miseries of life caused by rebirth—the result of man's own deeds.

The rituals of worship and sacrifice—a natural outcome of the above faith and known as *yajana*—became a common practice in India amongst kings and the poorest alike. Goats and other animals were killed in great numbers and fed to the sacred fire as offerings to the gods, resulting in the daily shedding of blood in the name of

religion. Then, as doubt in the efficacy of the sacrificial and ceremonial rites of Brahminism began, as in all other doctrines, to seep into the thoughts of the people at large, antagonistic and independent reformers commenced to make their appearance and the decline of the faith followed.

The outlook in life of all classes, at that juncture, was thus thrown into confusion. Everywhere individual men, inflated with a sincere belief in their own divinity, were building up their own philosophy and ethics and were willing, honestly or dishonestly, to rule, to direct or to be leaders who would reconcile the differences of the community; the dominant theories, however, could be grouped and classified as belonging to two schools of thought with opposing ideals, the imprudent upholding of which led to two extreme ways of life:

One view, held by the materialists, *carvaka* as they were known, was to the purpose that there was no after-life, no heaven and hell and no rebirth. They apparently rejected the superstitious rituals of worship and sacrifice of the Brahmins and put forward the assertion that "man is only born once into this world and can only die once, and as the same man can never be born again, his good and evil deeds also end with his death." This "one birth theory" soon gained ground and found support with the majority.

The natural sequel to that notion evidently did away with morality and provided an incentive to loose living and to indulgence. The practice of charity and meritorious works gave way to selfish desires and passions.

"Wine, women and song" and "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die" mottos held sway and spread far and wide, so that the safety of life and societies was jeopardized.

The other extreme view was upheld by the *tittia*. The latter, contrary to the *carvaka*, pinned their faith to the "more than one birth theory". In contrast with Brahminism, they denied the existence of a personal creator of the world and sought salvation, not in the performance of ceremonies, but in the attainment of union with eternal bliss through earnest concentration and purity of life. They regarded the "soul" as man's "true self" held in bondage by the physical body of senses. The soul, in their judgment, was itself eternal bliss in nature, but was subjected to rebirth in different bodies to suffer the miseries of life caused by the physical senses, until it could free itself from their bondage. Complete mastery over the senses, which latter they emphatically declared as the sources of temptations leading to impure life, together with a true knowledge of the blissful nature of the soul, would, in their belief, enable one to be absorbed into the omnipresent and divine soul of the universe immediately on the dissolution of the body. And those who still had a residuum, however slight, of ignorance and worldliness left in them at the time of death, would have to pass through the world of "Brahma" to await re-union with the "universal soul".

The idea of complete control over the physical senses inevitably led those fanatic philosophers astray and asceticism became the vogue with those who were

tired of life. Just to impress upon the mind the idea that there is no "self" or "ego", extreme devices and methods of painful austerities and self-mortification were invented as a co-ordinated discipline towards deliverance from the miseries of life. Subjection of the body to physical discomfort and self-denial and self-infliction of actual pain by numerous, often ingenious, modes of torture came to be common practice. Some went to such extremes as to forsake society and retire into deep and mountainous forests for years or for life, to meditate and to avoid speaking lies. Others fasted for months to overcome passion. Some held up their hands over their heads until they became paralyzed through inactivity in order to conquer their sense of touch, and some even pricked their own bodies with thorns to become insensible to pain.

In the year 587 B.C., after Gotama the Buddha had realized through self-enlightenment that each individual life-process must ultimately end in Nibbāna and that man, be he king or commoner, rich or poor, intellectually learned or otherwise, has (all alike) within himself, the same *inner* strength and wisdom to extricate himself from the entangling net of suffering and reach the journey's end in this life and on this earth, he began to expound his doctrine of Dhamma to all who would listen.

Discard all vain beliefs, all faith in rites and rituals, and put an end to the practice of sacrificial fires, for these are of no avail against ignorance. They are one and all products of self-delusion that tend to drive humanity towards dangerous bends on the road of life.

"Within this fathom-long body, O Bhikkhus; containing thoughts and volition, do I proclaim the world (suffering), the origin of the world (suffering), the cessation of the world (suffering) and the way that leads to the cessation of the world (suffering)."¹

Such was the challenging message proclaimed by the Buddha to a world pervaded by superstition, priestcraft and immorality.

For the benefit and welfare of the Sudras in particular, the Buddha condemned the caste system of the Brahmins as a hindrance to the progress of mankind, by recognizing to them on an equal footing the right to enter the Sangha, the noble Order of Monks and become his disciples.

"I do not call him a Brahmin because of his birth; but he who has no worldly possessions and has no attachment, him I call a Brahmin He who refrains from harming all living beings, does not himself kill or cause others to kill, him I call a Brahmin He who has no more desire for this world or the next, who is passionless and liberated, him I call a Brahmin He who has overcome both good and evil, who is not stained by grief and defilement, who is pure, serene and imperturbable, who has transcended joy and is enlightened, him I call a Brahmin."²

"I call him an outcaste, one who is full of anger and hatred, who is full of sin and envy, who holds wrong views and has a deceitful nature I call him an outcaste, one who has no compassion and kills living beings, one who steals, who bears false witness, who consorts with the women folk of his

1 *Chattukka Nipāta, Anguttara Nikāya.*

2 *Vasetha Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya.*

relatives and friends, who oppresses parents
 I call him an outcaste, one who possesses base
 desires, who is shameless and fearless of
 wrong-doing and falsely pretends to be an Arahant.

Not by birth is one an outcaste,
 Not by birth is one a Brahmin;
 By his own deeds one becomes an outcaste,
 By his own deeds one becomes a Brahmin.”¹

“Just as the big rivers, such as the Ganges, Jamuna, Ajirawat, Sarabhu and Mahi, that flow into the great ocean lose their names as soon as they mingle their waters in the great ocean, so all who adopt and practise the teachings of the Buddha cease to be Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.”²

The Buddha, actuated by a desire to lead human minds from their prevailing idle speculations to practical considerations of self-development in their endeavour to solve life's problems, also repudiated the two extremes which one ought to shun—the profitless life of indulgence in sensual pleasure, which ultimately ends in suffering, and the equally profitless way of self-torture—and declared the *Majjhima patipadā*, the Middle Path, as the true guiding principle of everyman's life.

“To give oneself up to indulgence in sensual pleasure, the base, common, vulgar, unholy, unprofitable, and also to give oneself up to self-mortification, the painful, unholy, unprofitable: both these two extremes the Perfect One has avoided and found out the Middle Path which makes one both ‘to see and to know’, which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna,

¹ *Vasala Sutta*.

² *Sonavagga, Udāna—Khuddaka Nikāya*.

"Free from pain and torture is this path, free from groaning and suffering, it is the Perfect Path."¹

The doctrine of *Buddha Dhamma* teaches that suffering is common human experience and that the attachment through ignorance to "self" as a separate entity is the accumulation of tendencies which make up the cause, not only of crime and vice in the present life, but also of the continued imprisonment of that individual self-consciousness within the bonds of sorrow. Those tendencies indeed are bound to obey the law of nature by being born, becoming infant, then child, adolescent, grown-up, by growing old and finally dying and by a continuous repetition of the process again and again, until the lesson is learned and ignorance is overcome.

The *Buddha Dhamma* teaches man, in his endeavour to gain salvation not to depend on a creator and ruler of the universe, benevolent or otherwise, nor on any other supernatural authorities,² nor on mediating priests, nor on any other outside aid, but to assert himself and turn inward into the recesses of his own mind in order to understand rightly how it works, so that he may know how to discipline it for the purpose of liberating himself forever from the iron grip of sorrow.

"Purity and impurity are (purely) individual. No one can purify another."³

"Be a light to yourself, be a refuge to yourself. Seek not refuge in others."⁴

1 *Samyutta Nikāya* 56. Nyanatiloka, "The Word of the Buddha".

2 See Appendix 1.

3 *Dhammapada*, XII, 165.

4 *Parinibbāna Sutta*.

“(For) self (man) is the master of itself (of his own mind); who else could be master? He who has mastered himself (his own mind) has gained a refuge which is hard to acquire.”¹

The Buddha thus bid everyman to be his own reformer, ruler and refuge, which he can be by no other means than those which the Buddha himself used and through which he attained enlightenment. That is by treading the Middle Path, the *Majjhima patipadā* which is a way of life lying between the two wrong extremes of idling and hurrying and which, if followed with sincerity and perseverance, will arouse into action that inner strength and wisdom in man “to see and to know” whenever he so wishes, thus enabling him ever to maintain equilibrium, to live in harmony with the flow of the natural laws, to live in peace.

In the teaching, stress is laid on *kamma* which is an omnipotent principle that better befits the dignity of man than the ancient theory of “God and Soul”. *Kamma* is a law in itself which operates independently without the intervention of an external agency. It not only explains why men are doomed to suffer, but also clears up the mystery of fate, as the outcome of man’s own deeds (physical, verbal and mental) in prior states of existence. It can therefore explain infant prodigies and the inequality of mankind.

According to the law of *kamma*, anyone who leads a life bad in deed, word and thought, whose views of life are mistaken, will in consequence of his views and deeds

¹ *Dhammapada*, XII, 160.

be reborn after death in one of the various realms of misery and must remain there until the activity of the evil *kamma* which brought him there is exhausted, before he is again born as a human being; anyone who, although his views of life are wrong, has led a life good in deed, word and thought, will be reborn after death in one of the six heavens or in one of the Brahma worlds to enjoy temporarily the effects of his good deeds before he is again born as a human being; but he who has reverently created habits of true conduct of life through treading the Middle Path and has persevered in the practice of the Seven Elements of Enlightenment will ultimately transcend selfhood, enter the Path of Light, become enlightened and attain the complete liberation in this very life.

Thus, the Middle Path, which is also referred to as the "Noble Eightfold Path" that leads to the extinction of suffering, is based on the idea that a virtuous life is the pre-requisite to Peace and self-salvation. And the moral precepts, as laid down in the well-known *Mangala Sutta*, are as follows:

(A Deva asked)

"Many gods and men, desirous of merit
Have variously practised auspicious observances,
But among themselves they fail to agree;
Declare Thou, what is the worthiest practice."

(The Buddha replied)

"To shun the companionship of fools,
To associate with the wise,
To honour all who deserve respect—
This is a most worthy practice."

"To dwell in a favourable land,
To have done good deeds in former lives,
To have a heart filled with right desires—
This is a most worthy practice.

"To possess much learning and skill,
To have acquired good behaviour,
To be the owner of right speech—
This is a most worthy practice.

"Respectfully to support parents,
To cherish children and wife,
To fulfil all undertakings—
This is a most worthy practice.

"To practise charity and dwell in righteousness,
To render help to relatives,
To follow a blameless occupation—
This is a most worthy practice.

"To cease from wrong-doing,
To abstain from all that intoxicates,
To maintain vigilance in the observance of Dhamma—
This is a most worthy practice.

"To develop reverence and true humility,
To be contented and grateful,
To hear the Doctrine at due seasons—
This is a most worthy practice.

"To display patience and meekness,
To behold and visit one who is purged of stain,
To hold religious talk at times appropriate—
This is a most worthy practice.

"To maintain perseverance and practise chastity,
To penetrate the Four Noble Truths,
To comprehend the verity of Nibbāna—
This is a most worthy practice.

"To be unruffled amid worldly changes,
To transcend sorrow and overcome passion,
To possess a mind that is calm, peaceful and secure—
This is a most worthy practice.

“They who have achieved all those things,
Cannot henceforth meet with defeat,
Everywhere they move in safety;—
This is the most worthy practice.”¹

So it came about that the doctrine of *Buddha Dhamma* was established and propagated in the world—the doctrine that teaches non-injury, even to self, forgiveness of enemies, co-operation and friendliness to all and aims at helping man to get out of the rut and bondage of “self”, so that he may realise for himself what real freedom is and consequently tread, of his own accord, the way of final liberation from suffering which is *Nibbāna*, the highest goal of the Buddha’s Teaching.



¹ *Mangala Sutta* — translated from the Thai version.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF GOTAMA, THE BUDDHA

In accordance with Thai reckoning, Gotama, the founder of what was later called Buddhism, was born in the year 622 B.C., under a sal-tree in Lumbini Grove on the outskirts of Kapilavatthu—a town in what is now the State of Nepal on the northern bank of the Ganges, some 130 miles due north of the city of Benares. He belonged to the Gotama clan and was born heir to the throne of the Sakiyas, a people of the Kshatriya or warrior caste, then under the rulership of King Suddhodana and Queen Mahā Māyā Devi. He came forth into the world on the full moon of May and his mother passed away on the seventh day after his birth, leaving him under the care of her sister Princess Mahā Pajāpati. He was named Siddhartha and grew up into a very handsome young prince, proficient not only in all branches of learning, but also in all manly games.

Upon the great sage Kāladevala's (the Sanskrit Asita's) predicting that he would renounce kingship and worldly treasures for the life of a recluse, his father sought to turn his mind towards sensuous enjoyment, and Prince Siddhartha was brought up with all the luxury, comfort and grandeur of a mahārāja's son. When approaching the age of nineteen, he was married to King Koli's

daughter, Princess Yasodhara, by whom he later had a son, Rāhula (meaning "a fetter"); but all the efforts of King Suddhodana to entice his son away from the life of a recluse were in vain.

The powerful heart-appealing incentive that swayed the thoughts of the son of a reigning chief away from worldly pleasures was the touching scenes, which by chance came before his eyes during the first three sight-seeing trips in his father's city. Prince Siddhartha saw an old decrepit, hoary and toothless man with a staff in his hand, almost bent double with age and walking with unfirm and trembling gait; then a man fouled with disease; and lastly an uncovered corpse. He was told by Channa, his chariot driver, that "every man who is born into this world is sure to become old, then sick, and ultimately must die, for death spares no one, be he a poor man or a mighty monarch."

The unsatisfactoriness and insecurity of what man calls happiness began to weigh heavily upon the Prince's mind, arousing the urge for a true knowledge of life and death and a way out of the miseries of earthly existence. The climax came one night in the palace garden after his return from his fourth sight-seeing trip. For he had unexpectedly sighted, during that outing, the last of the four omens dreaded by his father, a recluse in yellow robes holding a begging bowl. Wandering ascetics already existed in great numbers in India, but the dignified, peaceful and composed appearance of that particular recluse stirred and captivated his attention, and he was possessed with a passionate desire to become likewise.

Following that inspiration and with the unshakable resolve in his heart to abandon his throne in search of truth, Prince Siddhartha, at the age of twenty-nine, took a last look at his sleeping wife and child and went forth into the night, a homeless wanderer, in search of a solution to the enigma of life.

He, at first, strove to find the solution to his problem in the teaching of the best-known Brahman sages and hermits of the age. He became the disciple of Alāra of Kālama, one of the most renowned of them all. He learned everything that his teacher had to teach him of religion and philosophy; but when Alāra confessed that he did not know how to end rebirth, the wanderer left him. He next took lessons from Uddaka Rāmaputta, another famous teacher who taught him much; and again left him when Uddaka could not teach him the special knowledge he was seeking after. Having abandoned all hope of obtaining from teachers directions to the way of escape from rebirth, he resolved to try out asceticism and withdrew into the jungle of Uruvelā near the present temple of Buddhagāya, where, along with five other ascetics headed by Kondañña, he inflicted upon himself the most incredible bodily and mental sufferings. He earnestly and patiently put to the test all the salvation methods of asceticism, such as the daily exposure of his bare body, during the summer, to the burning rays of the mid-day sun; spending cold frosty winter nights immersed in water and fasting for months without break.

For six whole years, he devoted himself to self-torture with undaunted courage, until he became

worn out through fasting and reduced to a skeleton, as well as a prey to mental torture; but none of those practices brought him illumination. Intuitively, he perceived that asceticism was as senseless as a life of luxury, both being extremes and a hindrance to his progress in meditation. Realizing that a clear brain in a healthy body was indispensable to every truth seeker, he resumed eating normally; thereupon, the five ascetics and descendants of the sage Kāladevala (Asita), Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma and Assaji, who had been followers of Gotama all the while, immediately left him and went to Benares in great dudgeon. For such levity in an ascetic was entirely foreign to the ideas of the land and age, and to them Gotama seemed to have utterly failed. Gotama was therefore left to bear alone the bitterness of failure with a sore and distressed heart. Then having regained strength and health, he retired alone into the seclusion of the forest unwaveringly resolved to seek wisdom and salvation within his own heart and "in the silence."

One day, firmly determined not to rise again until the "Way" to emancipation from human sufferings should dawn upon him, he sat down crossed-legged, his body erect, deeply absorbed in meditation under a banyan-tree at Buddagaya in Magadha, and there came the culmination of lives of perfection. Deeper and deeper, the spiritual insight into the nature of existence came upon him. On the seventh day, at the time of the full moon of May, the final fetter was broken and Gotama attained to supreme Enlightenment and thus became a "Buddha" or a fully

"Enlightened One" at the age of thirty five. Wisdom had triumphed over ignorance: the mutual relationship between universal laws and human life had again been discovered. All was clear to the Buddha. He perceived with his "inner eye" his own former lives in the various worlds. He became cognisant of the reason why men died, why they were born and why they lived. He understood why men succeeded and why they failed, why they were happy and why discontented. He found out how good and evil deeds produced the personal *kamma* and how ignorance gave rise to rebirth. Fully realizing that "not even a deva god... can change into defeat the victory of a man who had vanquished himself", he triumphantly made the following utterance:

"For many lives have I sought you in vain, undergoing miseries again and again, O builder of the house. (*Tanhā*: the cause of repeated births).

"Now I have found you out. Your beam is cast down, your ridge-pole broken. You shall build no more houses (bodies)! My mind is now devoid of *sankhāra* (that which is born again after the death of the body). Never again shall I be born!"¹

At that juncture, the temptation to abstain from proclaiming such depth of wisdom to a world whose vision was dimmed by ignorance and selfishness flashed by; but when the all-seeing eye was cast upon those "whose eyes are only a little covered with the dust of spiritual blindness", Gotama turned back upon the threshold of *Nibbāna* to impart his wisdom to all humanity. And thus

¹ *Dhammapada* XI, 153-154

Gotama became not only a Buddha, but the Universal Buddha, the Exalted One far above gods and men.

At first, the Buddha thought of imparting his newly gained wisdom to his former teachers, Alāra and Uddaka; but finding that they had just died, he turned his attention to the five ascetics, his former associates, and set out towards Benares to share his newly discovered doctrine of *Dhamma*, the "Middle Path", with them. In the Deer Park at Isipatan, he delivered to the five ascetics his first discourse, the "*Dhamma-Cakka-Pavattana-Sutta*"

At the start, the five ascetics headed by Kondañña exhibited reluctance to listen to the Buddha, but finally consented to do so and, owing to their intellectual brilliance and, being already practised in mind concentration, they were able to grasp without question the significance of the doctrine and became fully convinced that the Buddha had discovered the truth concerning life and death. At the close of the discourse, all the five of them, at their own requests, became the Buddha's first disciples, known as the *Pancavaggiya Bhikkhus*.

The Buddha then wandered all over Northern India, preaching the "Middle Path", gradually gathering round him the Buddhist Sangha, an order of those who had followed his steps by renouncing the worldly life to find deliverance. His disciples included many sons of wealthy and noble houses, and the best-known of them, besides the five ascetics, were: Sāriputta, who, after the Buddha himself, possessed the profoundest insight into the *Dhamma*; Mogallāna, who had the greatest super-normal

powers; the Buddha's own son, Rāhula; his cousin, Ānanda, the devoted disciple and constant companion of the Buddha; Kassapa, the former fire-worshipper and leader of a thousand Brahmans in Uruvelā, who became the president of the Council held at Rājagriha immediately after the Buddha's death; Upāli, the master in *vinaya* and Anuruddha, the metaphysician.

The Buddha condemned the superstitions of sectarian teachers, particularly those involving sacrificial offerings; but he did not force anyone to believe in his own teaching. One may accept his Doctrine if it appeals to one or reject it if one cannot understand it. To make known for the welfare of all, but never to compel; to be ready to give counsel without attempting to convert, is the ideal he taught to his disciples. Once, in reply to the Kālāmas of Kesaputta, who came to seek his advice as to which of the numerous independent doctrines they should accept, the Buddha declared:

"Do not believe in anything on mere hearsay; do not believe in traditions because they are old and handed down through generations; do not believe in rumours or in anything because people talk much about it; do not accept anything as true simply because the written testimony of some ancient sage is shown to thee; never take in anything because presumption is in its favour; never accept views based on speculation because it agrees with thy notion or because the custom of many years leads thee to regard it as true; do not acquiesce on the mere authority of thy teacher or priest. *Whatever according to thy own experience and after thorough investigation agrees with thy reason and is conducive to thy own weal and to that of all other living beings, to the ending of suffering, to peace of mind and to Nibbāna—that accept as Truth and live accordingly.*"¹

1. Kālāma Sutta, Anguttara Nikāya.

For five and forty years, the Buddha spent his life as a wanderer preaching the *Dhamma* not only to Bhikkhus or monks but to the laity and all who would listen. A characteristic of his teaching was his unwillingness to enlarge on subjects which the intellect alone could never understand and which would give rise to arguments. He was content to point out again and again how the truth would reveal itself to everyone by the gradual development of one's own latent inner faculties. *For he realized that the mere stating of the truth would be of very little or no avail to anybody in gaining that complete and final freedom from all human miseries* leading to emancipation or *Nibbāna*, unless and until some of the latent faculties within had been awakened, enabling the hearer to grasp its significance. The Buddha delivered in all 84,000 discourses, the gist of which is to teach the proper conduct of life by inducing men to discard vice and to promote virtue with their own thoughts, words and deeds, and at the same time to purify their minds by means of meditation to make them fit to grasp that significance.

Finally, at the age of eighty, as he was lying between two sāla trees in Kusinara, he passed away at the full moon of May, in the year 542 B.C. He left to his followers "the *Dhamma* which I have taught you, that shall, after I am gone, be your teacher and guide", and to all seekers after truth a systematic teaching that will prove its own worth when put to the test of direct practice; a teaching which is not based on blind faith but is in accord with the principles of science, is tolerant in both its principles and application and has up to

the present day been free from the taint of religious persecution :

Resist all temptations to evil,
Acquire the habit of doing good,
Rid the mind of all impurities —
This is the Buddha's teaching in brief.¹



¹ *Dhammapada*, XIV, 183.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST SUTTA OR DISCOURSE

The first exposition of the Buddha's doctrine of Dhamma is found in the *Dhamma-Cakka-Pavattana-Sutta*, known to all Buddhists as the "Sutta or Discourse of Turning the wheel of Dhamma." It was the immortal message preached by the Buddha in Benares, when he began his mission, to the five ascetics who had practised austerities with him for six years in the jungle of Uruvelā, near the present temple of Buddhagāya. The sermon was so named because the Buddha knew that the wisdom which he had intended to impart to them and to all humanity would set rolling the "wheel of the Dhamma" which he had discovered and which would constitute a new conception of religion on account of its fourfold aims. Those are:

1. To warn man that his supreme duty is to conform to the laws of life and return to *Nibbāna*, his original abode of peace and quiet, and that he should commence to fulfil his own true spiritual mission here and now, and not wait until grief and suffering "touch his heart" or transform him into a victim of desperation.
2. To make man aware of the uselessness of idle speculations on matters incapable of conclusive proof or disproof and on those which have no direct bearing on the fundamental principles of

life. The latter vital points are "how to live" and what ends man should pursue with a view to attain peace. The Dhamma points out that the final truth is beyond the power of reason and the comprehension of the intellect, which unaided can therefore never reveal it to man; but that contact with the omni-present universal wisdom through man's own purified *inner consciousness* is possible and will consequently enable him to solve for himself all the *riddles of life*, such as those concerning spirits and deities, god and the soul, heaven and hell, Brahm, re-birth and Nibbāna. Man *can* obtain that knowledge if he so wishes.

3. To bid man, in his endeavour towards peace and truth, to put his trust in himself and develop self-reliance instead of being dependent on super-human authority for which there is no convincing evidence and demonstrative procedure, by making known to all that that infinite wisdom is "within the reach of all", for the key that unlocks the door to that universal wisdom is within each individual; each one has to unlock that door for himself; no other man can do it for him.
4. To re-state to man the "Middle Path" or "Noble Eight-fold Path" which leads to the cessation of grief and suffering, as expressed by the Buddha himself in those words: "One thing only, Brothers, do I make known, now as before: suffering and deliverance from suffering." It is the path of purity that all in time must tread, as

well as the path of light that will enable man to discover the basic laws of life: what he himself really is and where he is now, what he can do, how he can obtain real happiness within and without, how uncover the latent power within himself, thus enabling him to look forward with self-confidence to his own entry into the realm of real peace.

The Dhamma-Cakka-Pavattana-Sutta is the most important sutta to be found in the whole of the Tipitaka,¹ because it comprises all the fundamental aspects of the Dhamma or teaching in a concise and clear form and is considered to represent the résumé of all the teachings of the Buddha. It was actually addressed to the five ascetics "who had gone forth from the world" in the conviction that worldly life cannot give final happiness. However, it is not intended only for those with intellectual brilliance or those already acquainted with mind concentration practices; it is meant for "all who will listen", no matter what their standing, profession or occupation—whether kings or commons, presidents or the people, priests or laymen, rich or poor, professors or students, learned or otherwise. For the Buddha knew that the pursuit of extreme materialism had almost obscured the right understanding of "how to live" in man's conscience and that even his five former fellow-ascetics in spite of their intellectual experience and their determination to free themselves from the "wheel of re-birth" by means of their great power of concentration and endurance, were unable

1 See appendix 2.

to make any progress in their meditation towards the correct solution, because they were still far removed from "right understanding" of the "way" to uncover the purpose of life. In order then to drive home into their minds the value of right understanding as the first and foremost basic requisite on which all human accomplishments must of necessity depend for progress and success, the Buddha began his discourse by repudiating the two extreme ways of life then prevalent in the land, stressing the detrimental consequences which they would finally entail, due to wrong understanding, and then induced the five to give thought to the "middle way", which all the Buddhas including himself had trodden to Enlightenment.

Emphasis was laid on the following four doctrines, the right understanding of which is of paramount importance as an incentive to the treading of the Middle Path:

1. The doctrine of kamma

which may be likened to the universal law of equilibrium, the observance of which will impart to oneself and the world at large happiness, harmony and peace, whilst its defiance will bring about endless turmoil and suffering (*dukkha*). In other words, the doctrine teaches that man is his own creator and, therefore, has himself only to blame for all he suffers.

2. The doctrine of paticcasamuppāda

which is also known to all followers of the Buddha as the "Law of Dependent Origination", the right understanding of which does away with the theory of a

necessary first cause and will lead to the conception of "oneness" with the universe or the brotherhood of man. It points out the transitoriness (*anicca*) of life, the truth that it is possible to sever the links of re-birth and hence the absurdity of pandering to selfish ends.

3. The doctrine of bodhipakkhiya-dhamma

which may be regarded as a benevolent proclamation of the "way" to "know oneself and be wise", for life is but embodiments (*anattā*) and each individual mind is but a miniature of the universal mind; right understanding of oneself and of one's own capabilities is a prerequisite of a self-confident approach to self-deliverance. In other words, it is the short-cut to re-realising our supreme duty by re-forming our own habits with the aid of imagination, to finding out who we are and where we are going.

4. The doctrine of ariyasacca

which is the doctrine of the "Four Noble Truths." It includes the infallible method of self-deliverance through the acquirement of right understanding of life, the practice of morality and the unfailing adherence to meditation, and contains also the advice to start self-deliverance immediately and not after sufferings have pierced the heart. For right understanding and the grasping of the real significance of *ariyasacca* will induce the cultivation of that spirit within that delights to do no evil, not even to revenge a wrong, but delights to endure all, even to forgive an enemy, for the purpose of establishing oneself on what is solid instead of leaning upon a shadowy "I."

The *sutta*, in reality, forms an indivisible whole—a natural system of which each individual doctrine constitutes an absolutely necessary and indispensable link; but for the purpose of unfolding the Middle Way as the fundamental guiding principle in life for all to hold to, it is divided into four parts. In a truly scientific spirit, the four sections of the discourse are one and all based on the practical approach to life—a “register” or statistics of the logical and hard facts of real life.

“Look carefully around the four corners of the world: If no one else can be found anywhere whom one can love more than one loves one’s own self, then understand that all other individuals likewise love their own selves most. Consequently he who loves himself should refrain from causing distress to others.”¹



¹ *Udāna*, V. 47.

CHAPTER IV

THE DOCTRINE OF KAMMA

The essence of this part of the Teaching is that man is devoid of a soul-principle and is but a personified being in the continuity of its changing consciousness conditioned by "kamma", an invisible quality that is an ethical law to itself. Man, accordingly, has to respond with his own being to the moral consequences of what has been thought, said and done by the individual himself. Good deeds and their implications have effects on the doer just as the evil ones and their implications have. It is evident, therefore, that one lifetime is insufficient to reap or purge the merit and the demerit attached to all deeds. Each individual is therefore continually being born again and again in different embodiments and is thus his own creator and consequently becomes redeemer and refuge unto himself. His future life is dependent on the way of life he leads. He may be born in heaven or in one of the brahma worlds to temporarily enjoy the results of good actions performed on earth or he may be born in hell to suffer the consequences of evil actions before he is actually born again into the human state—to re-experience disappointments, sickness, old age and death as well as the sorrow that comes when his loved ones are stricken by those ills. Hence, existence is truly suffering and the extent of suffering is further conditioned by future activities, both mental and physical of the individual.

Thus, knowing that suffering is a common heritage of all sentient beings, it is reasonable to conclude that it is the responsibility of each and everyone to refrain from making worse the prevailing suffering of the world at large by bringing under control one's own craving for self-gratification. This end can be achieved through treading the "Middle Way" which will dispose one to non-violence, kindness, compassion and tolerance towards others, and which will, in time, lead one further on to freedom from repeated birth and hence to the real and lasting peace of *Nibbāna*. Worldly happiness in this light is thus comparable to sunshine. It is only beneficial up to a point beyond which it will blister and burn.

Self-indulgence and peace of mind are enemies

Man is here on earth neither to become addicted to passions and pleasures which give only temporary satisfaction, nor to invest himself with the authority of the Universal law by meting out extreme self-punishment with tortures which only amount to self-murder. Due to ignorance, he has for a long time allowed his own marvellous instrument to be played upon by his own feelings. He no more remembers the true art of living. For countless aeons, at the expense of his own intuitive reasoning power and peace of mind, he has neglected his vital duty to be the master of his own six illusive senses and permitted himself to become a slave to them.

Full of passionate self-concern—desires, ambitions, wishes, aspirations and prayers—he is now a prey to sensualism. He has fallen into the clutches of materialism. He aims blindfolded at pleasure or happiness. He overlooks

the fact that in reality there is no pleasure or happiness other than relative in this world in which he lives. To earn one single dollar after a day's labour would give happiness to a poor man or be an excessive joy to a starveling; but to one who daily makes a hundred dollars, it would bring indescribable displeasure or distress. He keeps on pursuing some objectives, the attainment of which he thinks will give him happiness. He clings to each object until his desire is fulfilled; but, when he has got what he desires, he finds out with disappointment that that very thing has lost all the charms it previously had and, being dissatisfied with it, he begins to seek pleasure in something else and starts again after some fresh object. Should it prove unattainable, he will either fret, subsiding finally into bitterness, or else, as is so often the case, find consolation in other objectives which are more easily reached and thus lay himself open to greater sorrows and bitterer disappointments. Not until he has drunk deep enough of the worldly pleasures to become satiated and filled with loathing, usually too late in life, will he begin to seek relief and satisfaction in the quiet of religious life. He does not know that the word "happiness" has meaning only when referring to "freedom from rebirth" and should be understood and used only in that sense. He is not aware that too much gratification of the senses makes one a slave to desire, hatred and illusion, and leads one to commit undesirable actions in thoughts, words and deeds, which ultimately will give rise to *dukkha*. *Dukkha* does not mean only quarrels, revenges, wars and various other modes of killing, which are the mass-effect of mass-thinking and

are bound to bring about not only sorrow (*soka*), lamentation (*paridevana*), grief (*domanassa*) and despair (*upāyāsa*) in this very life, but also untold miseries, pain and sufferings after death.

“For the man who is addicted to loose living, who is agitated by (evil) thoughts, who is of strong passions, who sees but the pleasurable—craving steadily grows. Indeed he jumps from life to life like a fruit-loving monkey in the forest.”¹

“Self, indeed, is the saviour of self. Self, indeed, is one’s refuge. Therefore by effort, earnestness, discipline, and self-control, let the wise make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.”²

Man enjoys free-will within the working of his own kamma, but he has no divine right

On the other hand, it is indisputable that man is the sole guardian of his own body, thought and action. In fact, he is the crowned king of his own dream world, visible and invisible, because he is endowed with free-will. He is at liberty to live his own life in the way of his own choice. He is intellectually free to woo, at his own risk, evil, because it may be more attractive than good. He is free to pursue his own good in his own way; but he has no divine right to deprive others of theirs or to impede their efforts to obtain it and, worst of all, to take his own life by suicidal means. He should not attempt to harm even his own self.

¹ *Dhammapada*, XXIV, 349 & 334.

² *Dhammapada*, XXV, 380 & II, 25.

Kamma literally means "work" or "action." It is a natural principle and in essence it prevails over all natural laws as govern gravity, electricity and magnetism, heat, light and sound, etc.; it is full of life, because it operates them all towards harmony. It is a living law and highly discriminative as are all other laws or natural phenomena of the universe which are not directly perceived by the eye, but the existence of which we have to admit. No one ever saw gravity, but we all know its effect beyond all doubting. It is the restraining force that enables us to walk on the surface of the earth instead of floating in mid-air. It is also that natural pulling force that enables all of us to consume food and drink without having to squirt them into our mouths. No one ever saw the actual thunderbolt, but only its lightning flash, or ever saw an epidemic, but only its germs through a microscope, and man will never see *kamma* with his "ordinary eye", even with the aid of the most powerful precision instrument to be invented; but its mass spreading effect on the human mind is only too obvious if we will only give thought to it.

Similarly, in its operation, *kamma* will throw back with accuracy the consequences of each and every deed upon the doer and, in its ceaseless effort to adjust troubled harmony and restore lost equilibrium, it is timeless, because its patience is inexhaustible. It will continue to operate as long as there remains a single being to disturb the equilibrium of the universe and instruct it to restore equilibrium back to its former peaceful state.

"It slayeth and it saveth, nowise moved
Except unto the working out of doom;
Its threads are Love and Life; and Death and Pain
The shuttles of its loom.

"It maketh and unmaketh, mending all;
What it hath wrought is better than had been;
Slow grows the splendid pattern that it plans
Its wistful hands between.

"This is its work upon the things ye see:
The unseen things are more; men's hearts and minds,
The thoughts of peoples and their ways and wills,
Those, too, the great Law binds.

"Unseen, it helpeth ye with faithful hands,
Unheard, it speaketh stronger than the storm.
Pity and Love are man's because long stress
Moulded blind mass to form.

"It will not be contemned of any one;
Who thwarts it loses, and who serves it gains;
The hidden good it pays with peace and bliss,
The hidden ill with pains

"It seeth everywhere and marketh all:
Do right — it recompenseth; do one wrong —
The equal retribution must be made,
Though Dhamma tarry long.

"It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter - true
Its measures mete; its faultless balance weighs;
Times are as nought, to - morrow it will judge,
Or after many days.

"By this the slayer's knife did stab himself;
The unjust judge hath lost his own defender;
The false tongue dooms its lie; the creeping thief
And spoiler rob, to render.

"Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,
Which none at last can turn aside or stay;
The heart of it is Love, the end of it
Is Peace and Consummation sweet. Obey!"¹

¹ Sir Edwin Arnold, "The Light of Asia."

Kamma and the science of dynamics

The universe may be considered as a general sphere of activities for innumerable kinds of forces and energies. Every deed from the slightest thought to the movement of a finger or the utterance of a word is a "force" applied, and every force dynamically is "that which changes, or tends to change, the state of rest or uniform motion of a body." It is a well-known fact that a force always tends to act in a straight line and, when met with resistance, translates itself into various kinds of energies, heat and motion through the invisible air in which we breathe. We are indeed swimming in a great big ocean of air just as fish swim in the sea. Every deed of ours therefore disturbs the tendency to equilibrium of the unseeable etheric structure of the universe and the equivalent of the deed will be thrown back upon the doer owing to the special elastic nature of the universal structure yet to be discovered by science. Hence, the natural law of *kamma* involves the whole conception of our present day science of statics and dynamics, especially in relation to life and thought forces, which are extremely fickle in nature. Its complete understanding can therefore be achieved only in solitude by those in possession of reverent wisdom. However, its elucidation can be exemplified, for the natural law of *kamma* is, in fact, the fount of Newton's third law of motion, known in every science laboratory: "To every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."

To test the validity of the law of *kamma*, one has only to bang one's fist on a table and the effect will be obvious. When hitting the table, we can only notice the

movements of our arm and fist and cannot see the thought-force with which we do the hitting. Neither can we see the table hitting back; and yet we must admit that somehow it does, because we can feel the pain in the fist. And the harder the blow, the greater the response.

Similarly, the working of the law can be felt through the echo of one's own curse let loose in a big hall or in a valley. The reaction may be instantaneous or felt only after a lapse of time, depending upon the nature and intensity of the action as well as the conditions of the surroundings.

For further clarification of the law, take the instance of a man leaning against a wall with his shoulder. The man is applying a force or, in other words, applying the weight of his own body against the wall through his shoulder. The wall, in response, reacts to that man's action by pushing against his shoulder. In order to maintain equilibrium and thus enable that man to lean peacefully against the wall, the reaction of the wall is commensurate with the action. However much the man wriggles, the reaction will adjust itself so that it will, at any moment, exert equal and opposite pressure against that man's pressure at that particular moment; otherwise the wall will tumble down and the man get hurt. That man of course feels happy at first, but should he persist and, without good reason, continue to lean against the wall without a break, the reaction would not cease either, because the law is timeless, and the inevitable consequence of the reaction to his action would in time make itself felt. That man would obviously become tired and possibly

"Whatever a foe may do to an enemy,
Or malicious men can do one to the other,
A mind bent on deeds wicked and filthy,
Can do to one what is worse and filthier."¹

Life indeed does not belong to any of us. It is a means to an end. Each and everyone of us has the same errand to run for mother nature; but owing to habitual yielding to cravings and temptations, arising from the willingness to obey the dictates of the emotions from birth to birth, man has forgotten his mission. He is now full of the three-fold craving, that is to say he has become a puppet to lust (lobha), anger (dosa) and delusion (moha). He no longer realises that he himself is the creator of all there is in the universe including himself, which is full of woe and sufferings.

Fretting and self-torture, those enemies of peace, will neither free him from the "wheel of rebirth" nor help him to escape from the clutches of suffering. He has to re-learn the lessons of experience and needs to realise that lasting happiness does not depend on status in life, nor on the blind pursuit of passions and pleasures without the backing of morality, but on man's own attitude towards them.

"Not wandering naked, nor matted locks, nor filth,
nor fasting, nor lying on the ground, nor dust and
dirt, nor squatting on the heels, can purify a
mortal who has not overcome doubts,

"Nay, such is no refuge secure, such is no refuge
supreme; Resorting to such a refuge one is not
released from all sorrow.

¹ *Dhammapada*, III, 42.

"Cut off your craving as, with the hand, an autumn lily. Cultivate that very path of peace. Nibbāna has been preached by the Auspicious One."¹

Man is a self-created being and has to abide by the consequences of his own deeds

A man's life, from the cradle to the grave, may be summed up as consisting of nothing but past and present kamma and their fruit or *vipāka*. According to Buddhist understanding, *kamma* is the aggregate of his thoughts, feelings and actions that have not yet spent their force and have still to find new outlets or more correctly new embodiments in which to manifest themselves, whereas *vipāka* means *kamma-result* that affects consciousness.

Man first thinks, feels and then performs deeds. He thinks he enjoys unconditional free-will and thus can perform any kinds of deeds he pleases. In other words, he believes he has the freedom to satisfy his own feelings or emotions and he does so regardless of the consequences to himself and to others.

"The one who has dared to defy just one law, by uttering untruths and scoffing at the next world, he is capable of all evil."²

He needs to be reminded that this playworld of his and all there is in it are but mental concepts, and that all human intellectual concepts and ideas have dual aspects, because they are the outcome of his faculties of analysing and estimating the fundamental "pairs of opposites." He is free, during his stay on earth, to think of virtue or vice,

1 *Dhammapada*, X 141, XIV 189 & XX 285. Narada Maha Thera's translation.

2 *Dhammapada*, XIII 176.

to entertain likes or dislikes and to do good or evil; but at the same time, he needs also to be re-instructed that thoughts and actions affect not only the thinker or doer but all that lives, because they must alter the tendency to equilibrium, not only between nature and himself, but also between nature and all her other littlest parts, on account of the "oneness" of all.

Each individual indeed is part of the universe. Any deed, good or bad, performed by an individual will therefore relatively affect all other individuals, because it will affect the whole embodiment of which they all are integral parts. Consequently, if man will disregard morality and uphold the practice of vice, there can be no peace in this world in which we all live.

Each and everyone of us, according to the Teaching of the Buddha, has a common purpose to fulfil, the attainment of *Nibbāna*. It follows that, while the highest goal for all beings to achieve is the same, that is the realisation of *Nibbāna*, the primary duty of man is not to set out to reform an imperfect world and thus interfere with the actions of others beyond giving them good ethical advice; it is to strive to uphold the universal law of life and purify himself in the only kingdom over which he has any real sovereignty, and that is his own mind.

Man thus needs to arrive at an understanding that he is bound by his own deeds. All he does, even his slightest thought, if intentional, must conform to the law of *kamma*. If he chooses to continue to follow blindly the dictates of his cravings, return he must, life after life and in various embodiments, to this world of causes and effects

to enjoy and to suffer the consequences of his good and evil deeds, until he has learned his lesson and overcome ignorance and thus become free from the bondage of self, which is but the manifestation of the fruit of past *kamma* as well as present *kamma* in the making. Knowing that every deed he knowingly and wilfully performs bears inescapable consequences and that no one is immune from the effect of his own deeds, he should devote himself to that which can be brought into the subjection of his will - the practice of self-reform and self-restraint for the sake of his own future weal.

“Evil deed is honey, thinks the fool,
So long as it ripens not;
But when (with age) it matures fully,
Then, coming to grief is his lot.”¹

The Law of *kamma*

The law of *kamma*, which conduces to righteousness, is an all-embracing law which guides and governs the evolution of mankind and is suitably described by H.P. Blavatsky as follows:

“*Kamma* is the ultimate law of the universe, the source, origin and fount of all other laws, which exist throughout nature. It is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause on the physical, mental and spiritual planes of being. As no cause remains without its due effect from greatest to least, from a cosmic disturbance down to the movement of your hand, and as like produces like, *kamma* is the unseen and unknown law which adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer.”

¹ *Dhammapada*, V 69.

Unto Nirvāna. He is one with Life,
Yet lives not. He is blest, ceasing to be.
OM, MANI PADME, OM: the Dewdrop slips
Into the shining sea:

This is the doctrine of the Kamma. Learn!
Only when all the dross of sin is quit,
Only when life dies like a white flame spent
Death dies along with it.

"Say not 'I am' 'I was' or 'I shall be',
Think not ye pass from house to house of flesh
Like travellers who remember and forget
Ill-lodged or well-lodged"¹

Kamma solves the inequalities in life and explains good and evil

Kamma is truly an immanent natural principle, a precise law of causes and effects that governs and guides all our existence towards the common purpose. It is eminently reasonable and evidently helps to solve many problems which cloud our minds concerning the moral order of the universe—the irregularities and diversities that we commonly meet in everyday life. For it supplies the answer to why men are not born equal—why some rich some poor, some happy some miserable, some intelligent and some idiotic. It also explains the perplexing problem of good and evil, and hence reconciles man to the apparent injustice which he suffers in this life, and encourages him to practise forbearance and refrain from cursing the other party as well as his own creator, whatever that may be, if not his own self.

¹ Sir Edwin Arnold, "The Light of Asia."

It directly governs man's thought and motive, the criterion of all his activities; in its working, it is impartial and does not favour one above the other. As a law, applicable to the moral and other realms of sentient life, it may be expressed as follows :

“Every deed—verbal, physical or mental—is an application of force or a transformation of energy that either disturbs or else promotes the natural tendency towards a state of equilibrium in the ethereal structure of the universe, which latter on regaining harmony, will silently react upon the doer's mind and body until an equivalent and appropriate retribution is made.”

In this light, everyman is born to enjoy and to suffer the results of his own past deeds, and his present activities and their consequences are entirely in his own hands, enabling him to mould his future weal or woe as he desires. This means that the given circumstances in which he finds himself in the present life are self-created and are no longer under his control; but his response to them is wholly dependent on the free exercise of his will.

Worldly riches in the present life is the outcome of one's own charitable deeds in the past ones and poverty the result of past selfishness and avarice. If we have not deprived others of life or blinded others, we shall not be the victim of murder or accident in turn or suffer blindness. If we have not made a habit of closing our ears against pleas for aid or been the cause of the deafness of others we shall not be born deaf. If we have not caused others to suffer inconvenience and pain, we shall not meet with similar obstacles in this life. In other words, what we are

to-day is the result of what we ourselves have decided to be through thinking and doing in past lives; consequently, the circumstances, conditions and environments in which we find ourselves in this life are our own creations. Thus, the inequalities and seeming injustices of life become intelligible in the light of the law of *kamma*.

If a man should be born blind or with other defects, be it physical or mental, it is because of the unwholesome *kamma* (*akusalākamma*) which he himself created in past lives. In other words, it is due to his former sins which must ripen in this life. It was therefore he who sinned, not his parents. Having made himself and all of himself, it is of no benefit to complain of his own defects and shift the onus on to heredity. It will in fact promote ill-will and hatred. The nobler attitude of mind is to accept the truth that all is happening because of one's own past folly and that one can mould one's future life by effecting changes in mind and purpose. In this way, one will live on the plane of causes and learn to endure conditions of one's own making.

On the same ground, if a man should be born healthy and intelligent and without physical or mental defects, it is because of the wholesome *kamma* (*kusalākamma*) which was skilfully created by himself in former lives.

In the *Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, a young truth-seeker, Subha, approached the Buddha and questioned him on the 14 diversities in life thus:

“What is the cause, O Lord, what is the reason why there is disparity of birth amongst human beings, for they are seen to be short-lived and long-lived, of bad and good health, of ugly and handsome features, without and with influence, poor and rich, of low and high family, stupid and intelligent?”

The Buddha briefly replied that all living beings are the offsprings of their *kamma*. *Kamma* is their inheritance. *Kamma* is their congenital cause. *Kamma* is their kinsman. *Kamma* is their refuge. *Kamma* differentiates beings into low and high categories. And on being requested to elucidate on his brief reply, the Buddha then explained as follows:

“There is the case of a person (a woman or a man) who leads a cruel life with bloodstained hands, given to striking and killing and is devoid of mercy towards sentient beings. Such *kamma* which he accumulates in this life is the cause of his future woe. At the dissolution of the body after death, he is reborn in a state of misery, in an unhappy destiny, in a state of punishment, or in hell. Or, if he is not reborn into those states, and is instead reborn into the human state, wherever he is reborn he is short-lived. Such actions tend to shortness of life.”

“There is the case of a person (a woman or a man) who has put aside and refrains from taking life, who dwells full of loving-kindness and compassion for the welfare of all living things. Such *kamma* which he accumulates in this life is the cause of his future weal. At the dissolution of the body after death, he is reborn in a state of happiness or in the heaven worlds. Or, if he is not reborn in the heavens but reborn into the human state again, wherever he is reborn he is long-lived. Such actions tend to long life.”

develop a pain in his shoulder and the longer he insisted on leaning against that wall, the more he had to suffer.

What kind of response one gets for pushing against or hitting an inanimate object is already plain; it is not necessary to illustrate what unending reactions man would have to reap if he were, not even to kill, but only to hit a living object, particularly one endowed with free-will for revenge and a host of offspring and kinsmen with similar possibilities.

“Never has hatred been nullified by hatred in this world. Hatred can only cease by love. This is in an ancient law.”¹

Kamma is the conditioning agent of rebirth

All enjoyment and suffering are thereby the reactions to our actions. Reaction to a particular action may take an inconceivable period of time to manifest itself; the law of *kamma* is therefore held by all Buddhists to operate from one life to the next and to be the main conditioning agent of our future existences. That is to say, *kamma* is the connecting link or bridge between one life and another, meaning that present life is the result of our past actions and future life will be the result of the present ones. If volitionally committed, the deeds which we are now doing, even a word uttered or a thought, are considered by a Buddhist to be individual *kamma* and will not be lost after death. For they are forces and, scientifically, all forces are governed by the “law of conservation of energy” and cannot be destroyed, although subjected to translations and

¹ *Dhammapadam*, 15.

transformations into heat, sound, light and other forms which modern physics recognizes as forms of energy, until they all become "nothingness." This doctrine of the indestructibility of energy is the central principle of modern science and is usually expressed as follows:

"Energy cannot be created nor can it be destroyed, but it may be transformed into any of the forms which it can take."

Thus, those *kamma*, the products of what we now do on earth, which are forces or energies, will therefore be conserved after death and remain in a potential state; otherwise a man could easily escape the consequences of a life of villainy by committing suicide, and the teaching of the Buddha with regard to the continuation of illusive consciousness of man would thus be put to nought.

What man does throughout life is thinking, feeling and acting. His thoughts give rise to feelings which urge him into action. He is therefore in ultimate analysis just a thinking machine, an embodiment of various kinds of matter and energy. Every time he thinks he creates *kamma*, i.e. uses up some of the latent energies within himself and translates them into a kind of force in keeping with that particular thought of his. That force being produced, it must undergo dissipation, which is a scientific fact. If it cannot manifest itself completely into sounds and physical actions, i.e. into words and deeds, it has to remain accumulated within and undergo very gradual dissipation into space through every nook and corner of the bodily structure, thereby accelerating what is biologically known as metabolism. A thought prompted

by anger usually increases blood-pressure and causes tenseness in all the muscles, making one ready to strike; a thought of death produces tears, if it concerns a loved one, or makes one perspire and tremble, if it is accompanied by fear. In this way, thoughts are considered to be the moulder of one's own features and personality as well as of one's destiny.

Thoughts that arise within the mind must at once undergo their own process of dissipation into space through and out of the material body, in the form of speech which is audible to the ear and of tears, sweat and movements which are visible to the eye, and they will affect the bodily organs for good or ill depending on their nature. Thoughts that fail to manifest themselves immediately will remain conglomerated within the mind to undergo gradual self-dissipation and keep the various organs of the physical body functioning. Those accumulated thoughts, especially those that were produced by the ever-clinging desire of an "ego" or "self" and failed to dissipate themselves completely through an already worn out body, will have to leave it, at death, as an aggregate of unexhausted *kamma*. Those unexhausted *kamma* will then undergo their own natural process of "self-preservation" until they can find, under favourable conditions, a more suitable material body in which to continue to work themselves out into space again, and they will keep on manifesting themselves in new bodies, after having left the old ones, just as water under the sun's rays changes into vapour and then condenses into clouds, to await suitable conditions to re-manifest itself, again and again, in the form of rain and water.

Thus, *kamma* is considered as the conditioning agent of rebirth of man, and the unmanifested thought-forces or *kamma* are collectively that very thing that is reborn. And for this reason all Buddhists are confident that the history of an individual, which really consists of only individual consciousness, does not begin at his birth, but has been in the making for countless ages and will not abruptly end at death, and that so long as we are content to think in terms of an abiding principle in man, we shall have to continue to endure suffering through rebirth.

“The Books say well, my brothers! each man’s life
The outcome of his former living is;
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss.

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn
Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew!
So is a man’s fate born.

If he who liveth, learning whence woe springs,
Endureth patiently, striving to pay
His utmost debt for ancient evils done
In Love and Truth alway;

If making none to lack, he thoroughly purge
The lie and lust of self forth from his blood;
Suffering all meekly, rendering for offence
Nothing but grace and good;

If he shall day by day dwell merciful,
Holy and just and kind and true; and rend
Desire from where it clings with bleeding root,
Will love of life have end:

Never shall yearnings torture him, nor sins
Stain him, nor ache of earthly joys and woes
Invade his safe eternal peace; nor deaths
And lives recur. He goes.

"There is the case of a person who always hurts other sentient beings either with hand or clod or stick or knife... He is reborn in hell or, if he arrives at the human state again, wherever he is reborn he is afflicted with ill-health."

"There is the case of a person who refrains from hurting other sentient beings either with hand or clod or stick or knife... He is reborn in the heavens or, if he arrives at the human state again, he enjoys good-health."

"There is the case of a person who is ill-tempered and is very turbulent, who even if a little is said against him becomes furious, malevolent and hostile, and exhibit anger, hatred and resentment.... He is reborn in hell or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is ugly and ill-favoured."

"There is the case of a person who is not easily angered or turbulent.... He is reborn in the heavens or, if he arrives at the human state again, he has beautiful features."

"There is the case of a person who is envious, full of jealousy, easily upset, and harbours envy at the gain, honour, reverence, esteem, respect and worship shown to others.... He is reborn in hell or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is lowly and possesses little influence."

"There is the case of a person who does not give in to jealousy.... He is reborn in heaven or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is highly esteemed and possesses great influence."

"There is the case of a person who does not give alms to an ascetic or brahmin.... He is reborn in hell or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is poor."

"There is the case of a person who gives alms to an ascetic or brahmin He is reborn in heaven or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is rich."

"There is the case of a person who is proud and haughty, does not salute one who should be saluted, does not rise before one who should be so treated, does not offer a seat to one worthy of it, does not make way for one who is entitled to it, does not honour, reverence, esteem, or worship those who deserve it He is reborn in hell or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is born in a low family."

"There is the case of a person who is not proud and haughty He is reborn in heaven or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is born in a high family."

"There is the case of a person who, when visiting a holy man, does not question him about what is good, what is bad, what is blameless, what is blameful, what should be followed, what should be avoided and what, if he does it, will lead to misfortune and unhappiness He is reborn in hell or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is dull-witted and stupid."

"There is the case of a person who, when visiting a holy man, questions him about what is good, what is bad and what, if he does it, will lead to good fortune and happiness He is reborn in heaven or, if he arrives at the human state again, he is intelligent."

But karmic rewards and punishments for lives lived in times gone by usually manifest themselves side by side, as for instance in the case of Queen Mallika.

In the *Sattama Sutta*, (*Anguttara Nikāya*), the Buddha, on being asked by Queen Mallika as to the reason why she was ugly, of a bad figure and horrible to look at, and yet wealthy and high in the social scale, gave the following reply:

“A woman who was irritable, spiteful and morose, and even at a trifle said against her has become enraged and immodest, and unreasonably manifested anger and fretfulness; but who was in the habit of giving alms to monks and Brahmins, and did not give in to an envious disposition, such a woman, when she leaves that existence and is born again into the human state, wherever she may be born, she is ugly, of a bad figure and horrible to look at, but is rich, affluent and high in the social scale.”

Moreover, it must be clearly understood that ‘evil’ *kamma*, cannot be balanced by ‘good’ *kamma*, for merit and demerit are separate and distinct; one does not cancel the other and they will work themselves out quite independently. The death of Mogallāna, the well-known disciple of the Buddha, serves as an appropriate illustration.

The story in *Dhammapadatta (Dandavagga)* is that Mogallāna, although having fulfilled perfection and attained to Enlightenment and although he consequently would, after death, pass into Nibbāna and never be born again, was beaten to death by robbers and all his bones were broken to pieces. On receiving the news, the Buddha’s other disciples started to say to each other, “Mogallāna the Great met with a death unworthy of him.” The Buddha then explained that the death of Mogallāna

the Great was unsuited to his present existence, but suited to his *kamma* of a previous existence, and told them that in a former life, Mogallāna had committed the very sinful crime of cruelty (parricide and matricide, two of the five capital offences). He deceived his blind and helpless parents and beat them to death, all the time pretending that they were being beaten by robbers.

“Neither in the sky, nor in the midst of oceans, nor in mountain caves, is there an abiding shelter where one can escape from (the consequences of) one’s own evil deed.”¹

It is also appropriate, at this juncture, to emphasize that it would be false and misleading to think that the attempted defiance of the Law of *kamma* is purely personal; indeed, it not only affects the person who defies the law, but will also bring turmoil to the world at large. For the prevailing chaos and disunity all over the globe can be traced to the effects of the tremendous power of hatred, prejudice, oppression, etc., which man, owing to ignorance, is indiscriminately pouring forth upon the world by night as well as by day. It needs but common sense to see that since a man’s thought or deed deeply affects himself and the world around him, a leader, with powerful thoughts trained in a given direction and unbacked by morality, can direct the thoughts of a group, and the mass thinking of a group in turn, be it a family, society or nation, can easily sway the whole world.

Good and evil in man are never static. They all the time exert their conflicting influences upon the mind, for neither is ever in the mood for retreat. They both are

¹ *Dhammapada*, IX 127.

ever eager to press forward and in the end one must triumph over the other. Since the world in which we all live is unquestionably a moral world and justice is at the foundation of all things, the only way to establish "homelife" for nations and "family life" for the world is to restore respect for law and justice; but then, law and justice should not be based on the whims of a majority, but on the "common purpose of man" and on the universal law of *kamma*, which tends to righteousness and to promote right conduct: obedience to parents, kindness to children and friends, mercy towards the brute creation, clemency to inferiors, reverence towards those worthy of reverence, suppression of anger, passion, cruelty and extravagance, as well as practice of generosity, tolerance and charity.

Thus, right understanding of the law of *kamma* is man's true duty. For it will not only give us self-reliance and help us to stop bemoaning our circumstances, but will also urge us to begin to be good and to do right. Immediate compliance with this universal moral law of tolerance and righteousness by individuals as well as by nations is the essential prelude not only to right living but to the promotion of world peace.

"Each hath such lordship as the loftiest ones;
Nay, for powers above, around, below,
As with all flesh and whatsoever lives,
Act maketh joy and woe.

What hath been bringeth what shall be, and is,
Worst—better—last for first and first for last:
The Angels in the Heavens of Gladness reap
Fruits of a holy past:

The devils in the underworlds wear out
Deeds that were wicked in an age gone by:
Nothing endures, fair virtues waste with time,
Foul sins grow purged thereby.

Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince
For gentle worthiness and merit won;
Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags
For things done and undone.

Higher than Indra's ye may lift your lot,
And sink it lower than the worm or gnat;
The end of many myriad lives is this,
The end of myriads that.

Only, while turns this wheel invisible,
No pause, no peace, no staying-place can be;
Who mounts may fall, who falls will mount;
the spokes

Go round unceasingly!"¹

True peace and lasting happiness lie within and not without

Man has become so selfish through ages of indulgence in the habit of yielding to the lust of his eyes and the desire of his flesh that it is now consonant with his nature to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied him. He keeps running blindly after wealth, power, passions and pleasure, and yet is still full of discontent even after acquiring his share. With all his genius, he has never learned to live happily with himself and to be satisfied with what he has, and has become more and more irrational through lack of mental peace. He grumbles about his own meanness and loses his temper as well as his health, and mourns the fact that he is not

¹ Sir Edwin Arnold, "The light of Asia."

happy. He has to re-learn that true peace and lasting happiness lie *within* and not without, that it is within his means to live happily and peacefully in this life without luxury and accompanying wealth and power. All he needs is to arrive at a proper comprehension of the law of *kamma*, the right understanding of which will never fail to make him realize the truth that he is living in the one world which is both a material and a spiritual world, thus creating in him an incentive to discard extreme ways of life and consequently an urge to eliminate his own selfish desires and unwanted emotions by self-assertion over the baser instincts.

Man still badly needs a sound conception of how to live, of the ends that he should pursue and of the difference between what is exalted and what is ignoble. And yet, the Buddha exposed the "Middle Way" or "Middle Path", some two thousand five hundred years ago, for all who seek after eternal peace to tread. However, it is in man's nature to neglect the best of advice; only after sufferings have pierced his heart, and not until then, will he make a resolution to achieve moral victory over his own self and become a man of virtue.

"Think not lightly of evil and say not in glee
 'It can never overtake me'!
 As the water-jar is filled even by drops falling
 The fool gets full of evil by gradual heaping"¹

The Middle Way

The "Middle way" is the pattern of life proclaimed by the Buddha for the sake of mankind. It is "The Noble Eightfold Path":

¹ *Dhammapada*, IX 121.

1. Right understanding (*sammā-ditthi*): the ability to understand that there is a common purpose of life, and that there exists a natural principle known as *kamma* to govern and to guide all life towards that common purpose.
2. Right resolution (*sammā-sankappa*): the ability to make an unwavering resolution to live rightly for the purpose of fulfilling the common supreme duty.
3. Right speech (*sammā-vācā*): the ability to abstain from harmful utterance and speak only the truth.
4. Right action (*sammā-kammanta*): the ability to refrain from physical conduct that is harmful to others.
5. Right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*): the ability to renounce a wrong mode of livelihood and pursue a right mode of livelihood.
6. Right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*): the ability to exert oneself to avoid and overcome bad qualities and to develop and maintain good qualities.
7. Right mindedness (*sammā-sati*): the ability to give oneself the right attitude of mind.
8. Right meditation (*sammā-samādhi*): the ability to maintain a calm and peaceful mind.

Conjointly, they constitute the true guiding principle in life for all to hold to. They will not only bring to all who tread the Path happiness and peace in the present life, but also lead them ultimately on to the realisation of the purpose of life and perpetual bliss. That

is to say, those who follow the Path with sincerity, earnestness and unshakable effort will not only be shown the abode on the right of which dwells self-confidence and on the left, self-determination, but will also be actually given the key to the innerdoor to the Bliss Supreme of the deathless. For the Buddha was not content to state that he could visualize all that he wished to survey and know the secret aims of nature; he also exposed the method that would enable all to see what he saw—the unseen—, and to know what he knew—the purpose of life and the “oneness” of all! Intellectual understanding of the method and reading about it, without earnest practice, however, will never train one to reach that stage of realisation and enlightenment. The method must be “lived.” Just as we can never satisfy our thirst by letting someone else drink in our stead; the realisation of the purpose of life must of necessity be acquired by each individual for himself. It can never come to one through the experience of others.

The Noble Eightfold Path is in fact a concept of too complex a nature for a thorough description. It aims to lead our minds to practical considerations of self-development in our endeavour to live a peaceful life and to solve the problems of life. It is also meant to serve as a raft that will stand all kinds of weather and at the same time be vast enough to carry all humanity across the great ocean of the earth to the further bank of *Nibbāna*. The followers of the holy Path are not asked to believe anything that cannot be verified by their own personal direct experience and the simple inference of their own reasoning power.

"This is the only way to purity of vision.
Entering upon this Path, you will lead Māra
astray."¹

"But each one has to struggle for himself, the
Tathāgatas are only teachers. He who has striven
hard and is on the way shall make an end of
pain."²

Treading the Noble Eightfold Path

To tread the Holy Path at first is to carry on as usual, to go about our various duties as circumstances may dictate, and to go on with our every day life in the world as we have been used to. That is to say, we are to offer food to the monks in the early morning as usual if that is our daily practice and go over routine occupations, such as eating, dressing up, going to work, etc. Whenever we feel inclined to play tennis or squash, or visit friends, or listen to the radio, or go to the theatre, etc., after the day's work, we may do so; but we must consciously bear in mind that we are treading the Holy Path, and must, therefore, find time to practise, as often as possible, self-possession and self-restraint with a view to identifying ourselves with the eight interdependent characteristics of the Holy Path until they become part and parcel of our very selves.

The first characteristic to possess is *Right understanding*. One must understand the following:

1. There is a common purpose of life and it is possible to realise it in this very life on earth, for the

¹ *Dhammapada*, XX 274.

² *Ibid*, XX 276.

Buddha not only realized it himself but also stated the method for all to do likewise. The method is practical, for since the time of the Buddha many of his followers have reached that stage of enlightenment.

2. This common purpose of life, which was called *Nibbāna* by the Buddha, is that state or realm which is only perceivable when the mind is free from all fetters and attains enlightenment.

3. Human deeds—mental, verbal and physical, all produce *kamma*, the conditioning agent of suffering and well being of man and that also of re-birth; life is but the overall embodiment through which unexhausted *kamma* from previous existences become manifest to work themselves out. A man reaps exactly what he has sown, even though it takes him an eternity of lives to reap his harvest.

4. Setbacks in life and misfortunes are the manifested effects of evil *kamma* wrought by the individuals in past lives, which must be conquered in this for one's own advancement. In other words, sins are misdeeds committed by man himself during his long journey to his mission, and each man must bear the burden of his own offences.

5. Neither a God, nor another man, nor any other power in the universe, can save us from the full consequences of our deeds in pain or pleasure; nor can they bring enlightenment to us. We must be our own reformers, rulers and refugees, and must work out our own salvations.

6. It is a mistake to hold on to the view that *evil kamma* can be offset by *good* and that at the end of life a

balance sheet is drawn up, in which the final balance may be one of merit or demerit. Merit and demerit are separate and distinct. They are not numerical figures, and always work themselves out to their final consequences quite independently.

7. Although we have no power at all to stop *kamma* already wrought from working themselves out, because they are conditions over which we have no control, we all have a free-will to create our own *kamma* for the future or even to cease from good as well as evil deeds, if it is our wish to sever the chain of future existences and hasten the attainment of enlightenment.

8. Good and virtuous deeds hasten self-salvation, whereas bad and evil deeds are hindrances.

We must, therefore, weigh these facts in our minds and "reason" them out, and we must also seek, if possible, to associate with those who have already experienced the fruits of the Holy Path for the purpose of convincing ourselves and dispelling all doubts, if any, of the soundness of this view of life. For there must not be any conflict between our own opinion or reason and what we are planning to do, otherwise the incentive to make a resolution will not be awakened.

The second characteristic to possess is *right resolution*, by rightly resolving with a determined heart, to do our very best to conform with the law of *kamma* with a view to living a happy and peaceful life and to solving finally the problem of life. Having thus taken this pledge, we need always be cautious in all undertakings and direct all our thoughts, feelings and activities towards good causes

and the common weal. For we now know, from the right understanding of *kamma*, that he who suffers deserves his suffering, and he who has cause to rejoice is reaping what he has sown, and also that the acts of one are the acts of the whole and the acts of the whole react on its littlest parts. We are therefore required to exercise courage to bear the consequences of all our misdeeds and, at the same time, to free our own thoughts from lust, ill-will and cruelty, by practising forbearance and developing our sensitivity for the feelings of others.

The third characteristic to cultivate is *right speech*. Speech indeed is one of the daily commitments of man. Since speech or what one says is the reflection of what one thinks and is the endorsement of one's approval of it, it is necessary to avoid lying, slandering, tale-bearing, vain talk and harsh language; by saying only what is worth saying and true, one adheres to right speech, which will lead on to right conduct and right action. In the Buddha's own words:

"What now is right speech? There, someone avoids lying and abstains from it. He speaks the truth, is devoted to the truth, reliable, worthy of confidence, is not a deceiver of men. Being at a meeting, or amongst people, or in the midst of his relatives, or in society, or in the king's court, and called upon and asked as witness to tell what he knows, he answers, if he knows nothing: 'I know nothing', and if he knows, he answers: 'I know'; if he has seen nothing, he answers: 'I have seen nothing', and if he has seen, he answers: 'I have seen.' Thus, he never knowingly speaks a lie, neither for the sake of his own advantage, nor for the sake of another person's advantage, nor for the sake of any advantage whatsoever.

"He avoids tale-bearing, and abstains from it. What he has heard here, he does not repeat there, so as to cause dissension there; and what he has heard there, he does not repeat here, so as to cause dissension here. Thus, he unites those that are divided, and those that are united he encourages. Concord gladdens him, he delights and rejoices in concord; and it is concord that he spreads by his words.

"He avoids harsh language and abstains from it. He speaks such words as are gentle, soothing to the ear, loving, going to the heart, courteous and dear, and agreeable to many,

"He avoids vain talk and abstains from it. He speaks at the right time, in accordance with facts, speaks what is useful, speaks about the law and the discipline; his speech is like a treasure, at the right moment, accompanied by arguments, moderate and full of sense.

"This is called right speech."¹

The fourth characteristic to embrace is to practise only *right action*, for, like speech, action is the result of our thinking and our saying as well as our endorsement of it. It is thus a necessity to place all our actions under control and abstain from killing, stealing, taking possession of things without the owner's consent, committing adultery, causing trouble to others and even doing harm to oneself.

"What now is right action? There, someone avoids the killing of living beings, and abstains from it. Being conscientious, full of sympathy, he is anxious for the welfare of all living beings.

1. *Anguttara Nikaya*, translated by the Mahathera Nyanatiloka.

"He avoids stealing and abstains from it. He does not take away, with thievish intent, what another person possesses of goods and chattels.

"He avoids unlawful sexual intercourse and abstains from it. He refrains from having intercourse with such persons as are still under the protection of father, mother, brother, sister or relatives, or with married women, or female convicts, or with flower-decked girls. This is called *right action*."¹

The fifth characteristic is to uphold *right livelihood* by adopting right modes of livelihood that are not detrimental to others but are beneficial to the community, bearing in mind that living on the earth is but for the acquirement of knowledge, experience and wisdom, and that we eat to live and do not live to eat. The Buddha was not against the pursuit of material ends when not carried to extremes. He, in fact, emphasized that a layman should 1) exercise perseverance to earn his living in an honest way without causing distress to others; 2) take care not to lose the money and property which he has taken great pains to earn for his own well-being; 3) associate only with those whose integrity is unassailable and not with spendthrifts; 4) abstain from spending or overspending his earnings in a way to cause pain to others or to promote vice; that is to say he should spend his earnings only on the necessities of life and on charitable purposes.

The following five trades and professions—dealing in arms, in human beings or slaves, in slaughtering for meat, in intoxicating drinks and in poisons—should be renounced for the sake of one's future welfare.

¹ *Ibid.*

The sixth characteristic is to enforce self-discipline in *right effort* to uphold moral life with courage as well as with an ever keen spirit. This is usually accompanied by keeping constant watch over our own behaviour, especially on willed deeds and intended actions—the outcome of our own desires; also by the practice of self-discipline with a view “to avoid” committing evil and demeritorious deeds that have not yet been committed, “to overcome” those that have already been committed, “to develop” and “to maintain” only motives and habits that would hasten the fulfilment of our resolution.

With the seventh characteristic, one goes one stage further in self-discipline by acquiring that quality of *right-mindedness*. It is the habit of mindfulness of the truth that we are all here to fulfil the same mission, with the help of the same kind of mind, operating at every moment as a keen-sighted and benevolent critic of itself. And although, in the past, we have been slaves to our senses, the promoters of desires, we now know from the Teaching that we have, in the present, a free-will to become masters in the future, as well as latent powers within us to accomplish life's true purpose. We should, therefore, be always on our guard lest we should make recurring mistakes more acute, by being ever mindful in taking stock of our thoughts, of how they arise and disappear, and of how transient, miserable and unprofitable they are; whether they are prompted by greed, anger or delusion; whether they are lofty or low, noble or base, fickle or concentrated, for the purpose of controlling desires. A diligent mind, neither lazy nor idle, with very

few desires, has no cause for grief or fear, because it is not led by the six senses and therefore not inclined to self-flattery, which is nothing but a means of deception. Such a mind is, in fact, a mind full of "contentment", it is the dwelling place of joy, happiness and peace in abundance, with no room for arrogance and contemptuous thoughts. In short, to acquire right mindedness is to cultivate the habit of that spirit within that delight in putting away evil and in doing good, and to devote oneself to the purification of the heart from the illusion of self by letting the mind pervade the whole world with boundless thoughts of loving—kindness, compassion, sympathy and equanimity.

Lastly, the eight characteristic is to practise *right meditation*, by giving play, in the silence, daily if possible, to our intuitive faculties. We have rightly resolved to live a happy and peaceful life and to pursue the common goal of all human beings; we must, therefore, keep our resolution to solve the questions: "what are we here for?" "what is that mission we are here to fulfil?" for the purpose of acquiring deep insight into things according to their realities and preparing ourselves to leave those earthly bodies, when the time comes, and disappear into "that realm, where there is neither the solid, nor the fluid, neither heat nor motion, neither this world nor any other world, neither sun nor moon, a realm beyond birth and decay." That can be done only by adhering with perseverance to right meditation. Indeed, right meditation is, the short-cut to enlightenment and the realisation of truth, the very key to the innermost door to self-deliverance, as well as the promoter of self-induced happiness and

peace on earth. For a happy and peaceful life must, to a great extent, be a quiet life, because it is only in an atmosphere of quiet that true joy can live and the mind be kept calm and peaceful, and thus free from further defilements by undesirable *kamma*, free from offences of wrong understanding, wrong resolution, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong living, wrong effort and wrong reflection.

We now know that the mind is the father of *kamma* and that it chooses at every moment whether its actions shall be 'good' or 'bad.' Choice between right and wrong is difficult to make at times; it is harder still when it lies between right and right. Right meditation, however, will not fail to supply either approval or disapproval of the choice made by the intellect. For those who have succeeded in making right meditation really their own are the possessors of that *inner eye*, the faculty "to see and to know" the embodiments and "tendencies" of all the unmanifested *kamma* which still remain aggregated within the universal storehouse.

Thus, to tread the Noble Eightfold Path is to uphold righteousness and practise self-assertion with a view to attaining peace, enlightenment and Nibbāna, by consciously keeping every thought, every feeling and every action in our lives in rhythm with the law of *kamma*, and by striving to cleanse the mind, to free it from stain and passion with the aid of right meditation:

"Kill not the feeble or the strong, nor cause to
destroy

For all fear death and need no killing to die.

Steal not by night or day—an action better left
undone
'Tis a misdeed hereafter torments one.

Commit not adultery, for brief is the joy, lasting
the fright regardless of sex.
Nay! it is a thing evil both in this world and the
next.

Utter not falsehood and avoid deriding hell as silly.
An evil capable of dragging one to protracted
misery.

Shun all that intoxicate and give offence to none
Better it is to be clean in life, intelligent and
without passion."¹

"Thus knowing this truth (that the path trodden by
the sages is the Path to Purity), let the wise man
restrain himself according to the Precepts so as to
quickly clear the way that leads to Nibbāna."²



¹ *Dharmapada*, XVIII 246, 247.

² *Ibid.*, XX 289.

CHAPTER V

THE DOCTRINE OF PATICCASAMUPPĀDA

This part of the teaching is to make known to all the truth that there exists, besides the law of *kamma*, another immutable natural law, the right understanding of which is essential to the emancipation from suffering of sentient being. All formations, according to this Law of Dependent Origination, as it is called, are "impermanent" (*anicca*), are "subject to suffering" (*dukkha*) and are "without an ego" (*anattā*). In the light of this law, man's rebirth, with its accompanying sorrow, is thus not due to blind chance, but is dependent upon conditions; hence, through the removal of those conditions, namely the attachment, through ignorance (*avijjā*), to a "permanent self" or a "permanent soul" selfish craving (*tanhā*) is subdued and all sorrow must disappear.

Idle speculations and discussions can never solve the riddles of life

The purpose of life is truth itself, and truth transcends intellectual knowledge. No amount of arguments will demonstrate its real nature, and the intellect can only indicate the way leading to its comprehension. A thorough knowledge of logic, psychology, psychiatry and even of all the branches of modern science can only help one along a certain stage of the journey to the goal, past which there lies a realm beyond their compass, in spite of the precision instruments available

to-day and the verbal knack of man who coins new words to express new ideas.

Similarly, the first cause and the last effect are inexpressible; and even if they were not, it would not be possible for the intellect to grasp them within a lifetime. They are, in fact, undeclarable and can never be revealed to man; all superstitious attempts at statement and revelation were and will be a check in the advancement of knowledge and learning. Hence, to fathom the purpose of life which is truth, it is useless both to indulge in idle speculations and discussions and to seek enlightenment from outside.

"The jungle, the desert, the puppet show, the writhing, the entanglement of speculation are accompanied by sorrow, by wrangling, by resentment, by the fever of excitement; they conduce neither to detachment of the heart, nor to freedom from lusts, nor to tranquillity, nor to peace, nor to wisdom, nor to the insight of the higher stages of the Path, nor to Arahatsip."¹

That grasping state of mind, *upādāna*, that lust after absolute intellectual knowledge which is an impediment to enlightenment, must be eliminated from the mind. We must understand nature rightly in her right perspective and then look into and within our own bodies and minds for the solution. Progress in the Noble Eightfold Path proclaimed by the Buddha, if sincerely and earnestly pursued, will develop the mind in such a way that it can continue to function long after it has passed the utmost

¹ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I. 455. T. W. Rhys Davids, "Sacred Books of the Buddhists", Vol. II, p. 188.

limit of logical and scientific reasoning and proceed nearer and nearer the truth without ever having to adhere blindly to something which it cannot perfectly comprehend.

"Should anyone say that he does not wish to tread the Holy Path unless the Blessed One first tells him whether the world is eternal or temporal, finite or infinite; whether the life principle is identical with the body, or something different; whether the Perfect One continues after death, etc.,—such a one would die, ere the Perfect One could tell him all this."¹

"It is as if a man were pierced by a poisoned arrow, and his friends, companions or near relations called in a surgeon, but that man should say: 'I will not have this arrow pulled out until I know who the man is that has wounded me—whether he is a noble, a prince, a citizen, or a servant'; or: 'What his name is and to what family he belongs'; or: 'whether he is tall, or short, or of medium height.' Verily, such a man would die, ere he could adequately learn all this."²

"Therefore, the man, who seeks his own welfare, should pull out this arrow—this arrow of lamentation, pain and sorrow."³

"For, whether the theory exists, or whether it does not exist, that the world is eternal, or temporal, or finite, or infinite—certainly, there is birth, there is decay, there is death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, the extinction of which, attainable even in this present life, I make known unto you."⁴

¹ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 63. Mahathera Nyanatiloka, "The word of the Buddha."

² *Suttanipāta*, 592. *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Majjhima Nikāya*, 63. *Ibid.*

The Noble Eightfold Path leads to enlightenment and Nibbāna

It will have been noted that contempt of the world drove Gotama to abandon his princely life of passions and pleasure. A strong desire and earnest yearning to solve the problems of life and death led him to despise worldly happiness and live the determined life of a recluse. The great intensity of the emotion incited courage and bestirred will-power to resolve to exert self-control. Secluded surroundings were an added circumstance which helped him to overcome his own natural revulsion against his new way of life, to cast aside lust and anger and to act only in a way harmless to others. But owing to the presence of a last residuum of ignorance, *upādāna*, he unknowingly challenged the law of *kamma*, with the result that his progress in self-salvation came to a standstill, and he was, in fact, facing failure.

The subsequent acquirement, however, of *right understanding* to the effect that extremes in modes of living are actual hindrances to success in self-salvation, followed by the *right resolution* to give up rigorous fasting and to depend on meditation only in his endeavour to seek after Truth, put delusion on the wing. For he became wiser and apprehended that right conduct of life must of necessity comprise right understanding and right resolution, as well as *right speech*, *right action* and *right living*, all of them acting as barriers against the ten following capital transgressions :

Three of the body :	Taking life, theft (including taking what was not given), adultery.
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Four of speech : Lying, slander (including 'saying here what one hears there'), abusive words, vain talk.

Three of the mind : Covetousness, malice, scepticism; for they are all hindrances to enlightenment.

Not until Gotama had regained his health and summoned up courage to maintain *right effort* and simultaneously preserve the attitude of *right mindedness*, by pledging his word to the world that, regardless of consequences, he would remain seated in his meditating posture until he realized the "Way" of escape from death, did he meet with success.

After having declared: "Even if the skin, sinews and bones should wither away or the flesh and blood of my body should dry up, I shall not give up my efforts so long as I have not attained whatever is attainable by manly perseverance, energy and endeavour!", he engaged in *right meditation* till his mind became perfectly calm and still and at the same time peacefully alert watching the show and listening to the voice in the Silence. And of a sudden he was awakened by his own "discerning consciousness" to the fact that he was suddenly flooded with "light", and could see visions as well as hear melodious replies to whatever he wished to know, untroubled by the six sense-organs. He became aware that he was not only in possession of *inner eye* and *ear* — that unbelievable power to see unseen visions and to hear inaudible voices, but could "see and know" at will all that transcends the

intellect and imagination — the unconceivable. He therefore continued to meditate and conducted his investigations into the nature of the universe and all there is in it, particularly the question of his own past lives, for the purpose of seeking out deeper realities. He probed through every stage of "change" until at last he attained to full illumination and all the natural processes of the universe and the supreme law governing them, which he later called *paticcasamuppāda*, were clear to him. He realised that all lives are integral parts of the universe and are therefore subjected to the rigid deterministic law of nature. Mankind must in the end voluntarily sever the twelve *Nidāna* or the chain that binds the five aggregates of existence (*khandha*) together, and enter *Nibbāna* —

"that realm, where there is neither the solid, nor the fluid, neither heat nor motion, neither this world nor any other world, neither sun nor moon, a realm beyond birth and decay."¹

Gotama had reached that awareness of "Oneness" of himself with the absolute, for he became instantaneously aware that the gates to that realm beyond birth and decay were all flung wide open for him to enter whenever he should choose to do so. He thus realised that he had become a "*Buddha*", one of the All-Enlightenment Ones.

"Oh! Amitaya! measure not with words
Th'Immeasurable; nor sink the string of thought
Into the Fathomless. Who asks doth err,
Who answers errs. Say naught!

For shall any gazer see with mortal eyes,
Or any searcher know by mortal mind;
Veil after veil will lift — but there must be
Veil upon veil behind.

¹ *Udāna*, VIII, 17.

This is enough to know, the phantasms are;
 The Heavens, Earths, Worlds, and changes
 changing them,
 A mighty whirling wheel of strife and stress
 Which none can stay or stem.

Pray not! the Darkness will not brighten! Ask
 Naught from the silence, for it cannot speak!
 Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!
 Ah! Brothers, Sisters! Seek

Naught from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
 No bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and cakes;
 Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;
 Each man his prison makes."¹

The law of *paticcasamuppāda*

"*Paticcasamuppāda*" literally means "dependent origination." In the Buddhist world of thought, it is considered as the supreme law of nature governing the universe itself as well as all there is in it. It cannot be thoroughly defined, expressed or described, for words cannot convey it, because words really have no meaning apart from the consciousness of man. Its conception as a law, however, may be expressed thus.

"All things in the universe, including the universe itself, can neither remain absolutely still nor retain their existences (*anicca*), for, in reality, they are one and all but transitional 'changes' from that state of 'becoming this becoming that, and ceasing to be this, ceasing to be that' (*dhukka*) to that final state of 'nothingness' (*anattā*)"; which means that all things in the universe, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, are relative

¹ Sir Edwin Arnold, "The Light of Asia."

and without permanent existence, because they are all outcomes of mental delusions that must ultimately be subjected to extinction and become nothingness.

It is neither the law of mutability nor the Aristotelian law of causation, nor the chain reaction of organic compounds; but it embodies all these as well as all other natural laws and phenomena, and even the law of *kamma*. It is in fact wisdom itself and, to understand comprehensively how embracing it is, one has to retire to the place where it resides—in the silence, for it is from the silence that wisdom will gradually break through from the great universal storehouse of nature. And hence only suggestions of its nature, for the purpose of awakening the real insight of man, are possible.

To look at the universe in the light of *paticcasamuppaḍa* is to regard it scientifically as a process. For it is but an aggregation or a huge mutable embodiment of matter and subtle mind-substances in motion, caused by the latent energies and "rays" liberated through the ceaseless mutual actions and interactions of the subtle mind-substances on matter and on themselves. The universe may thus be said to consist of events or changes, any particular instantaneous stage of which becomes at the same time both effect and cause, and there is nothing in it that can remain the same for a moment. The existence of anything at any particular moment is only temporary, because it is dependent on its own previous apparent existence and must undergo a chain of continuous changes, by automatically dissolving into nothingness as soon as it is formed in order to give rise to apparent future existences. It follows therefore

that everything is relative and transitory and will continue to become its own apparent past, present and future existences until it has relinquished all its latent energies and ceased to manifest itself by self-diffusion into light or wisdom.

"In the past only the past existence was real, but unreal the future and the present existence. In the future only the future existence will be real, but unreal the past and present existence. Now, only the present existence is real, but unreal the past and future existence."¹

Hence the Buddha proclaimed the three universal characteristics or the *Three Truths*, which constitute the foundation of his Teachings, applicable to every conceivable thing:

1. All is impermanence (*anicca*).
2. All involves misery, evil and suffering (*dukkha*).
3. All is without real "ego" or real ownership (*anattā*).

Anyone will have to admit that what we call this "world" of ours, and everything in it, be it visible or invisible, e.g. sun, moon, trees, whales, elephants, germs, atoms, protons, electrons, time and space, etc. and even man himself and the mightiest of gods, are nothing but mental concepts, are subjected to "change" and will, in the end, dwindle into nothingness. For everything in the universe, whether of matter or of mind, as well as the universe itself, is in a state of constant flux, and nothing can remain "absolutely still" even for a small fraction of an instant. Everything around us is changing, although

¹ *Dighā-Nikāya*, 9—Nyanatiloka, "The Word of the Buddha."

some changes are imperceptibly gradual, as far as human senses are concerned, and usually unnoticed until they pass through certain stages of modification, whilst others are rapid. In the case of mountains, they may last for hundreds of thousands of years, but in the case of some insects or living cells, for some hours only, and in the case of thought, only for an instant. And thus there can be no real "self" or permanent "identity", only "becomings" or series of "arising" and "disappearing" which ultimately are subjected to "extinction." In both living beings and inanimate things, there is nothing that abides—all are perishable and subject to destruction; nothing can keep its true form or shape; there are only forces (*kamma*) and motion; there are only energies and rapidly moving electrons; there is no rest, no peace; nothing can last forever; all movements must ultimately cease; there is an end to everything; there is no permanent ownership nor permanent proprietorship; and only where there is no change, no movement, can there be no suffering.

Construction (*uppada*) and destruction (*nirodha*) are component parts of the law of *paticcasamuppāda*, and these two factors of the fundamental "pairs of opposites", are never at rest. Just like waves in the ocean; one ripple rises and subsides and thereby causes another to appear and to carry on the same process *ad infinitum*. The rising of one ripple depends upon the sinking of another, and the sinking of one depends upon the rising of another, and thus the process flow continues; the principle is applicable to everything conceivable, that is to say, from the very moment anything is conceived it tends towards destruction.

The newly constructed beautiful house loses its original freshness day by day due to changes taking place within the materials employed. For wood must undergo its own process of decay or dry rot, iron must rust, other kinds of metals must corrode and all non - metals must deteriorate.

The law of *paticcasamuppāda* is thus the compendium of the Supreme Wisdom that came to Gotama while meditating under the Bodhi - Tree, the knowledge that there is no personal creator and ruler of the universe, but only an impersonal law governing all phenomena. If there be no creator, it follows then man is himself the creator, not only of his own images but also of his own cycles of the *samsāra*, that sequence of the arising, transition, decay, passing away and re - arising of beings, which will manifest itself and die out and continue to repeat the process until the attainment of *Nibbāna*, when it will cease to manifest itself owing to lack of fresh motives and desires.

“If ye lay bound upon the wheel of change,
And no way were of breaking from the chain,
The Heart of boundless Being is a curse,
The Soul of Things fell pain.

Ye are not bound! The Soul of Things is sweet,
The Heart of Being is celestial rest;
Stronger than woe is will: that which was Good
Doth pass to Better — Best.

I, Buddh, who wept with all my brothers' tears,
Whose heart was broken by a whole world's woe,
Laugh and am glad, for there is Liberty!
Ho! ye who suffer! know

Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,
 None other holds you that ye live and die,
 And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss
 Its spokes of agony,

Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.
 Behold, I show you Truth! Lower than hell,
 Higher than Heaven, outside the utmost stars,
 Farther than Brahm doth dwell,

Before beginning, and without an end,
 As space eternal and as surety sure,
 Is fixed a Power divine¹ which moves to good,
 Only its laws endure."²

The Twelve Nidāna or the Wheel of rebirth

The realisation that there is neither underlying reality in matter, nor god, nor permanent soul at the back of mind, but only the motion and action of the embodiments of karmic forces in rythm with one another and in conformity with the Law of *paticcasamuppāda*, like waves in the ocean and in the air, enabled Gotama to perceive first the truth that:

To keep rythm with nature is peace,
 To be out of rythm is to court trouble,
 And to go against the rythm is to become a prey to
 unending sufferings;

and also that very solution which he had long been seeking after, the "Way" of escape from rebirth and its train of sufferings. For it is evident that if there is no real soul to be reborn, rebirth can be brought to an end.

¹ The law of kamma.

² Sir Edwin Arnold "The Light of Asia."

He therefore made use of his newly acquired mental faculties, especially the power of visualisation, to go over his own past lives; while thus doing, the truth about the thirty-two realms of Brahm, heaven and hell began to reveal itself. He finally came to the conclusion that human life is the main stage of the universal process and that the repeated re-appearance of a so-called personality on earth is governed by the *Twelve Nidāna*, or that series of the twelve causal links from one birth to another, giving rise to the continuity of that state of "becoming this becoming that, and ceasing to be this ceasing to be that". According to *Dasama Sutta, Samyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha had found out the following facts:

Decay and death (jārā-māraṇa) depends on birth (*jāti*),
for they can take place only after a man is born.

Birth (jāti) depends on the "process of becoming" (*bhāva*), the "unexhausted kamma" of previous existences, which require a medium in the form of a material body in which to manifest themselves.

The process of becoming (bhāva) depends upon clinging (*upādāna*); a man's life is but a chain of constant clinging to existence that prompts the repetition of deeds, mental, verbal and physical, which continue to create and perpetuate the same kind of *kamma*, the preservation of his own separate identity.

Clinging (upādāna) depends upon desire or craving (*tanhā*), especially the desire to live, the desire for a better and happier future life and the

craving to possess a "Don Juan" body, face and personality, either on earth or in heaven.

Desire (tanhā) depends upon feeling (*vedanā*), because no agreeable feeling whichever fails to stir the emotion which in turn awakens desire.

Feeling (vedanā) depends upon contact (*phassa*), for without contact with either an internal or external object, such as an idea or a woman, there can be no feeling, hence no desire.

Contact (phassa) depends upon the six sense-organs and their objects (*salāyatana*); that is to say, in the absence of the six perceptive faculties, that is the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and awareness as well as in the absence of the objects of the so-called senses plus consciousness (colour, form, sound, odour, savour and abstract ideas), contact can never occur and is thus dependent upon the six sense-organs and their objects.

The six sense-organs and their objects (salāyatana) depend on name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) or, in other words, on mind and matter, for if there were no mind and matter, which the sense-organs and their objects are made of, the six sense-organ could not exist, hence no contact, no feeling, no desire, etc.

Name and form (nāma-rūpa) depends upon consciousness (*viññāna*), for without consciousness there would be no man, no universe, no "pairs of opposites", no "good and evil", only void.

Smith, a name, means nothing to us if we do not know who he is, to which family he belongs, etc. Similarly, a form is meaningless without a consciousness of the object.

Consciousness (viññāna) depends upon previous sensorial impressions (*sankhāra*), which consist of memories of past experiences enabling man to distinguish his own consciousness of one thing from that of another. When we say we are conscious of a mutual friend, Mr. Somebody, it simply means that we all have many common impressions of him: he comes from a place called Somewhere; he is a man, young and nice; he has a captivating voice, etc. But if we eliminate those impressions of Mr. Somebody one by one, we shall, ultimately, possess no consciousness at all of Mr. Somebody, for he has become a Nobody—a nonentity. Thus, consciousness is dependent upon sensorial impressions.

Sensorial impressions (sankhāra) depend upon ignorance (*avijjā*), the inheritance of man since the inconceivable beginning. Ignorance consists in the concept of and belief in the permanency of a "self", an "ego", a "soul"—a belief contrary to the universal law of *paticca-samuppāda*, which latter states that nothing can remain still for any instant because everything is all the time subjected to "change", and that every sentient being is subject to a constant process

of its own (*anicca*), is therefore void of separate identity and without ownership (*anattā*) and thus a prey to suffering (*dukkha*). No man is ever in reality the same man he was the day before.

The Buddha proclaimed that ignorance is the root of all evil—the sire of an endless progeny of causes and effects as well as the parent of suffering. And re-birth is the outcome of ignorance, particularly ignorance of the truth that there is a common purpose of life and ignorance of the law of *paticcasamuppāda*, giving rise to self-delusion and defiance of the law of *kamma*, through the habit of taking things for granted. For man is indeed a creature of habits. He not only thinks, feels and acts, but, as is often the case in life, he also likes to imitate and accumulate habits. In his babyhood days, he began to imitate the verbal and physical deeds of his parents and elders. Fundamentally, there is nothing wrong with most habits, especially those harmless little routine ones of rising at a fixed time everyday, going over one's ablutions the same old way, mechanically eating, drinking, resting, earning one's living, reading and sleeping at regular hours, for such habits may promote self-control. It is only when man yields to unwanted habits dictated by the senses and continues, until the end of his life, to stamp or imprint the various sensorial impressions (*sankhāra*) of the "I" or "self-hood" upon his own mind as an unchanging identity, that they become as *kamma* the germs of propensities and impulses to be re-born a sentient being. If the concept of the "I" as permanent is not impressed

upon the mind, there can be no consciousness for future existence. If there is no consciousness, there is no name and form. If no name and form, no six bases. If no six bases, no contact. If no contact, no feeling. If no feeling, no desire. If no desire, no clinging. If no clinging, no process of becoming. If no process of becoming, no rebirth. And finally, if no rebirth, no misery, no decay, no death.

The following diagram (reproduced from the Mahathera Nyanatiloka's "The word of the Buddha") will help to understand the dependent relationship among the various stages of development of the human mind, in terms of past, present and future existences:

Past existence	1. Ignorance (giving rise to self-delusion, desires, clinging, etc.) 2. Impression (life-affirming activities)	<i>Kamma-bhāva</i> (Action-process) A
Present existence	3. Consciousness 4. Name and form 5. Six-fold sense activities 6. Sensorial impressions 7. Feeling	<i>Uppatti-bhāva</i> (Birth-process) B
	8. Desires 9. Clinging to existence 10. Process of becoming (<i>bhāva</i>)	<i>Kamma-bhāva</i> (Action-process) C
Future existence	11. Rebirth 12. Decay and death	<i>Uppatti-bhāva</i> (Birth-process) D

Note: A represents "unexhausted *kamma*", i.e. *kamma* which had already been produced and accumulated through clinging to existence and which, after having left the dead material body, have to remain potential and in rhythm with nature until they have gained sufficient momentum to manifest themselves again as consciousness in a new material body to continue their dissipation.

B represents the gradual dissipation of A through a new material body, wherein the "unexhausted *kamma*" will build up the new body to suit their own purpose of self-dissipation and self-manifestation into space.

C represents the gradual accumulation of fresh *kamma*, especially those which require material bodies as a medium in which to undergo dissipation, if one still possesses self-delusion.

D represents the critical point wherein the material body can no longer withstand the process of dissipation, and the individualized *kamma* have to leave it and remain as "unexhausted *kamma*."

The khandha or five aggregates of existence.

Knowledge of and insight into the true nature of the universe thus lead to the discovery of the twelve *nidāna* and consequently does away with the need of understanding and conceiving man with a "central essence." Since everything contained in the universe must necessarily be part and parcel of the universe, man therefore inescapably belongs to the universe. And since he is endowed with a special type of mind containing "Imagination", the faculty of forming and multiplying mental images, he has evidently the most highly evolved of

all the types of intelligence to be found in the three kingdoms, animal, vegetable and mineral. He can therefore be considered as a miniature of the universe consisting in an aggregate of single and compound embodiments of matter and mind-substances, which ever continue to act and react upon one another and cannot remain still. In terms of forces (*kamma*), he is, just like the universe, made up of various kinds of energies within a material body composed of matter in the solid, liquid and gaseous states.

Because of this truth and also for the purpose of aiding all who wish to take a direct course towards enlightenment and *nibbāna* through meditation, the Buddha declared that every visible sentient thing, including man, is made up of "five aggregates of existence" or "*khandha*", one of which consists of material embodiments (matter) connected with "cleaving", whereas the other four are composed of non-material embodiments (mind substances) which correspond to what man conceives to be the permanent soul. Those five aggregates are: form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), cognition (*saññā*), impression (*sankhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*).

1) Form (*rūpa*) represents the visible attributes of the material body made up of solids (*pathavi-dhātu*), liquids (*āpo-dhātu*), latent heat or energies (*tejo-dhātu*) and gases or motion (*vāyo-dhātu*); it may also be considered as composed of 32 kinds of attributes, such as hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, etc. In other words, it includes what man considers to be his own body, which however he cannot take away or prevent from decay.

2) Feeling (*vedanā*) consists of those subtle mind substances which, on coming into contact with foreign objects, will manifest themselves as sensations of pain which may be pleasant or unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant, attached to the ordinary five senses, and as sensations of like or dislike belonging to the "sixth sense", or the heart or mind. Thus, feeling arises only when there is contact between the six sense organs and the external world; but as soon as it arises, it will simultaneously undergo changes in intensity and finally vanish. And as there is not an instant when the body is not in contact with the other parts of the universal structure, feeling is present at all times whether we are conscious of it or not. It follows that its existence is dependent upon our own consciousness.

3) Cognition (*saññā*) is composed of another variety of subtle mind substances, which enable one to recall, to reason, to compare and to classify experiences attached to the "feeling", and to remember and to distinguish among the various sensations of likes and dislikes, of visions, sounds, smells, tastes and touches, as well as of one's own imagination, arising from the contact of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind with external objects and abstract ideas. Cognition thus may be compared to the conscious mind. It is in fact what we call the "intellect", which always prompts us to subject everything to an "intellectual test and domination", because its work is to divide and subdivide and then classify the elements produced, which may reach an enormous figure, by rejecting as the fruit of imagination, unworthy of consideration and of being

claimed, all those which the intellect fails to understand, thus leading us further away from truth.

4) Impression (*sankhāra*) comprises yet different kinds of mind substances produced whenever decisions and ideas are formed by cognition or the conscious mind. As soon as those are produced and come into being, they will immediately dissipate themselves, through the medium of the material body, into space, as deeds, thoughts and words. Those that fail to effect their own complete dispersion into space, owing to the material body having already become a worn-out instrument, will leave it and remain potentially accumulated as a conglomeration of unspent forces or mental pictures, or sensorial impressions, or memories of past experiences, or characteristics, until they can find a new material body in which to continue their unfinished task of dissipation. In contrast with the conscious mind, impression may be likened to the "sub-conscious" mind. It is the store-house of *kamma*.

5) Consciousness (*viññāna*) consists of those very elusive mind substances which manifest themselves as "awareness" of both past and present existences of form, feeling, cognition and impression as "one" with themselves, thus exerting a very powerful clinging influence (will) and holding especially the last three qualities or aggregates together at all times, even after death. It is that mental quality that creates and sanctions different names and forms and the idea of "self", to distinguish its own personal identification from the external world, and thus continues to incite cognition (*saññā*) to produce that particular kind of *kamma* which causes rebirth.

This last aggregate of existence is often erroneously conceived as identical with the "soul", or an individual essence of personality, that is everlasting and can transmigrate from birth to birth. That is the very point on which the teaching of the Buddha differs fundamentally from all others. In the Teaching, the consciousness (*viññāna*) in man, similar to the remaining four aggregates, is impermanent and cannot retain its identity or uniform entity. It is therefore not identical with the so-called self-principle or soul. It can arise only when there is contact of external objects, forms and ideas with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, and would thus give rise to six different consciousnesses, "eye-consciousness", "ear-consciousness", etc. Besides, the "eye-consciousness" may exist only as long as the eyes are opened, for the image that persists after the eyes are shut is no longer seen by the "eye-consciousness" but by the "mind-consciousness", which again can exist only so long as the image is not forgotten. And again, these six different consciousnesses all die their temporary deaths each time man goes to sleep. The Buddha taught a causal process of continuous births (*jāti*) of individual actions and results which, for lack of an appropriate English equivalent, is expressed by "rebirth" throughout this book, although the word is unsatisfactory. There is consequently "rebirth" in the Teaching, yet not of "soul". There is no "re-incarnation", no "transmigration" because there is no soul, not even *viññāna* or consciousness alone that is reborn; but there is rebirth of the individual kamma or those unmanifested mind-substances or in other words thought-forces concerning the ego that must continually undergo their own process of transformation.

"O Bhikkhus! Among those worldlings who are unacquainted with the Teaching and thus regard this body, composed of the four elements as belonging to them, some may one day come to loathe it, and as a result some may manage to tame their own passion and some may even attain to complete detachment of it. Why so? Because the growth and decay as well as the arising and passing away of this body, made up of the four elements, are perceptible to them."

"But, O Bhikkhus, those unlearned worldlings who are attached to that thing in them called thought, or mind, or consciousness, they will not be able to induce that loathsomeness, and consequently they cannot diminish their passion nor can they completely withdraw attachment to it. Why? Because they cling to it with the thought 'it belongs to me' and they have, for a long time, been regarding it as constituting 'the self', 'the ego'."

"O Bhikkhus! It would be better for the unlearned worldlings to regard this body, built up of the four elements, as their ego, rather than the mind. And why? Because it is evident that this body may last for a year, for two years, for three, four, five, or ten years, or twenty years, or thirty years, or forty years, or fifty years, or even for a hundred years or more; but that which is called thought, or mind, or consciousness is continually, day and night, arising as one thing and passing away as another."¹

"Akkivesna! The disciples of the Tathāgata contemplate on the *khandha* and understand, through true wisdom and in accordance with reality, that whatsoever there is of bodily form, of feeling, of cognition, of impression, of consciousness,

¹ *Khandhavavagga, Samyutta Nikāya* — translated from the Thai version.

whether one's own or external, gross or subtle, lofty or low, far or near: they are all just impermanent aggregates of existence, 'they do not belong to me; they are not the self, they are not my ego.'

"Akkivesna! By thus practising, those disciples are conducting themselves according to the Teaching, true to the Tathāgata's words, thus enabling them to transcend all doubt and to attain to the courage of their own conviction in regard to the Teaching of the Tathāgata, and consequently render dependence on others unnecessary."¹

The Buddha thus saw man as an embodiment of the *khandha*, form, feeling, cognition, impression and consciousness, each of which must, in conformity with the law of *paticcasamuppāda*, undergo its own individual process or continuity of composition and dissolution, as well as the combined process of the whole, until the affinity which keeps them bound together is completely dissipated. And it is to the struggle to delay that final dissolution of the so-called individual, by isolating himself from the rest of existence, that man's rebirth and the accompanying recurrent sufferings, disease, decay and death are due. Man naturally clings to his own individual existence as a permanent identity, and thinks that it is quite distinct from the world he treads, as well as from that of other men and beings who exist in it now or who have existed in the past, or who will have their existences in the future. He even thinks that his own self is so important that it cannot possibly ever cease to be, and he is constantly concerned with ways and means of making that little self of his own immutable and happy forever.

¹ *Chulasaccaka Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya* — translated from the Thai version.

The king then mentioned one after another all the 32 attributes of the body and all the sense-organs and their objects, as well as the *khandha*, and asked whether each represented Nāgasena. And after having received negative replies, he said aloud :

“This monk has spoken an untruth. At first he said that there was Nāgasena, but in the end he did not admit it. He is not worthy of trust.”

He then turned to the nobles and asked them to bear him witness. The sage immediately switched on to other topics to calm down the king's excitement and then inquired :

“Did Your Majesty come here on foot or by other means ?”

The king: “I came, at first, in a chariot; but when I arrived at your abode I had to walk in bare-footed.”

On hearing the word ‘chariot’ uttered by the king, the sage spoke aloud to all present;

“His Majesty has said that he came here in a chariot; will all present please remember that word ‘chariot’. I shall prove to you what that word means.”

The king: “I don't speak what is not true, venerable monk. I came here in a chariot.”

Nāgasena: “Your Majesty said that you came here in a chariot. So, if it please Your Majesty, I should like to ask you to prove the existence of the chariot. Is the ornamental cover the chariot?”

The king answered : " No. "

The sage then mentioned each of the various parts of the chariot and after having received negative replies from the king, he said,

" At first His Majesty said that he came here in a chariot ; but on being asked as to what is a chariot, he refused to prove its existence and only admitted the existence of various parts. I appeal to the nobles, and ask them if it be proper that the great king of all Jampudwipa should back down his own statement and utter an untruth. "

The king was not convinced and continued :

" No untruth have I uttered, venerable monk. The cover, wheels, spokes, axle, seat, reins, yoke and other parts all united form the chariot. They are the usual signs by which that which is called a chariot is known. "

Nāgasena : " Your Majesty has proved that real existence of the chariot is not to be found. Naturally, real representation of the name Nāgasena cannot, in like manner, be found, except its parts. "

And quoting the words of the Teacher, the sage concluded :

" Just as the various parts of the chariot form, when united, the chariot, so the *khandha* (five aggregates of existence), when compounded in one body, form a being, a living existence. "

The "self", the "ego" and the "soul" are all delusions

The three characteristics of the universe, 1) all is impermanence, 2) all involves misery, 3) all lacks an "ego" or "real owner", are facts, realities, which we all come across and experience in our everyday life. The underlying idea is that the structures of all the elements are in a perpetual state of commotion, although unseen by the eye, naked or with the aid of microscopes. Modern science at first based its conception of matter on the invisible atom, which was held to be the smallest particle of matter incapable of further sub-division and which could only exist in a stable form when combined with one more atom of the same kind to form a molecule; but it has now been ascertained and confirmed through the discovery of atomic energy, that an atom can be split. Scientists have further found that each atom consists of various particles including a number of electrons, and that each of the latter is continually moving at terrific speeds within the orbit of the atom, giving rise to ions or electrical energies or "rays." It follows that in every atom there is life, and it may be deduced therefrom that everything, whether of matter or of mind, although it may appear to be at rest or still, is in reality in motion and cannot, therefore, retain its true shape or form. Anyone who insists on holding on to the contrary view point will only be courting misery. He will, in time, come to realise for himself that there is really no permanent identity, and that even his own intelligence or mind or soul, whatever he calls it, consists only in energies, crystallised and massed together variously according to their own individual

processes. It now remains for the scientists not to pay so much attention to the application of physical science to purely materialistic ends, and to devote a greater part of their talents to the elucidation of the purpose of life. They will then come to realise the stupendous truth that man is the very power or the very unknown that they seek, and also that the chief purpose of being born is not to exploit and conquer external nature, but to conquer "self" and evolve beyond the commonly held concept of an individualised personality.

"If there really existed the 'ego', there would also be something which belonged to the ego. As, however, in truth and reality, neither an ego nor anything belonging to an ego can be found, is it therefore not really an utter fool's doctrine to say: 'This is the world, this am I; after death I shall be permanent, persisting and eternal?'"¹

We have seen that man is made up of *khandha*, each of which is composed of unstable matter and mind substances. We know that his body is perishable and that his ideas and thoughts are fickle because his mind is always in a state of flux and commotion. Besides, he temporarily dies every time he goes to sleep, for sleep is a kind of death; each beat of his heart brings him closer to his natural death. And yet he refuses to give thought to the questions: "What am I here for?" and "Whither am I going?" He underestimates his own capabilities and allows his reasoning power as well as his intuitive faculties to lie dormant. He prefers to be led by the senses and continues, through countless lives, to hold on to the

¹ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 22; Nyanatiloka, "The Word of the Buddha."

conception of a "permanent soul", without suspecting in the least that it naturally leads to the superstitious belief in eternity, which is contrary to the hard facts facing us in everyday life and to the latest discoveries of science.

This belief in eternity unavoidably brings into the mind a more or less clear delineation of a manlike deity, a "Supreme" being or soul up in a heaven, with supernatural qualities and powers—the natural product of man's imagination! Imagination easily gets out of control through fear, hope and desire, and thereby, not only tends to differentiate the oneness of god into the many, the god of a savage being a savage, the god of a poet, a poet, etc; but also instils the further superstitious belief that a man-like god is powerless to resist corruption, that even god can be tempted. Hence the multitudinous methods of ritual worship, sacrifices, offerings and prayers, as inducements for god's special favours, giving rise to rivalries, quarrels, pride and prejudice, hatred and ill-will, all of which in turn gradually join forces and lead to disputes and wars and, consequently, to human sufferings and misery.

This unfounded assumption of the existence of a permanent soul in man, supposed to keep its identity in the course of man's mental and physical changes and to transmigrate from body to body, was a common belief prior to the birth of Gotama, the Buddha; but such concepts of a permanent "soul", a permanent "I", a permanent "self" and a permanent "ego" are all illusions set up in the mind by the rapidity of the changes in consciousness itself, that makes the stream of life or soul appear continuous and endowed with an identity.

As an illustration, let us take the case of a cinema picture. We know that it is made up of thousands of individual pictures, each separate and distinct; but when they are projected on the screen, they follow one another with such speed that the illusion of continuity is produced. Similarly, when a man looks through the window of a fast-moving train, the high speed will set up an illusion, and it will appear to that man that he and the train on which he travels are both stationary, while the trees, meadows and fields, the telegraph posts, etc., are rushing on past him.

All such illusions, when allowed to take root in the mind, are called "*upādāna*", and are all traceable to man's own ignorant attachments, which have developed into habits and then into a mood to ignore truth, so that he fails to view the true impermanent nature of all things in the universe, including his so-called own "soul", and holds them to be unchanging. For example, it is usual for a man who has been using a bicycle or motorcar of a particular make for a period of years to say that it is the same cycle or car he purchased years before, although that cycle or car has so many times undergone changes and replacements of almost each and every part of it through repairing, overhauling and re-varnishing. This misconception is clearly due to the fact that the purpose of riding the cycle or using the car has been fulfilled all along and, regardless of the truth, the user continues to identify it as the same. It would thus appear that man takes a special delight in creating different souls for everything to which he is attached and, at the same time, in attempting to make

these souls, which in this case correspond to "bicycle-soul" or "motorcar-soul", live forever.

Such identifications, however, may without doubt be necessary, but for practical everyday purposes only, and must not be taken as true. They should all be regarded only as mental concepts created by man for convenience and comfort, but they are not true, because they all are relative in "time"—another mental concept of past, present and future, which will only hold good as long as man wills to remain attached to it. For time itself is an arbitrary notion, based on the revolutions of the earth on its own axis as well as on its journey around the sun. The speed of those two motions of the earth is not constant, although the variations are negligible for everyday purposes. Incidentally, that dual motion of the earth is proof that even inanimate things, which we perceive to be still, are in reality moving continuously, accumulating momentum, producing friction, etc., and hence are subjected to "change."

Now, take the case of a child who grows up into a boy. Friends of the family who see him once in a long while no doubt see great changes in him every time they visit the family; but the parents of the boy who see him everyday will not notice the changes as very striking; whilst the boy himself who has been watching his own features more than anyone else, possibly several times a day, will ignore the changes altogether. Not only that, he will imitate the habit of his parents and elders, and continue to do so until the end of life, that of regarding the body as containing a permanent soul, and the soul as

identical with, or as possessing, or as containing, or as residing in, the feelings (*vedanā*) or in each of the remaining *khandha* (cognition, impression and consciousness). The boy, grown into a man, will therefore hold fast to that elusive idea of "I am" and to the other notions of "This *I* exists", "I shall be", "I shall not be", "I want this", "I want that", etc., as referring to a separate soul, without suspecting in the least that they all are illusory. These expressions do, in reality, only denote his bodily and mental functions which are more readily observable. For when he says "I am here" or "I was there", the term "I" is only used to signify the particular location of "his body" and nothing else. When he says "I think", the term "I", in this case, does not refer to the body, but stands for the mind and particularly for the "cognition" part of the mind. But when he says "I lecture", this "I" neither stands for the body nor for the mind separately; it is the subject of the joint action of both, because neither can the tongue lecture without the thinking mind, nor can the mind lecture without the bodily tongue. The lecture is possible only when both the tongue and mind operate as one.

It is evident, therefore, that we are all unconsciously developing the habit of allowing ourselves to be deceived by the senses at all moments of the waking state. Every time we say "the sun rises" or "the sun sets", etc., we simply ignore the facts and stuff the mind with more illusions, if we do not take the trouble to adjust or correct all those inaccurate expressions and prevent them from becoming auto-suggestions. This does not mean that we are to decry or belittle the senses as bad or useless. Indeed,

the senses are a part of us; but not the "real" part, not the "ego." We must therefore see to it that our minds are not enslaved and deceived by these illusions through auto-suggestion. It is our duty to make our own minds masters of the "senses"; but the mind cannot be the master until it recognises its superior power and develops the "will" to exert its superiority. Otherwise it will always remain a servant and be driven about by any whim and fancy, just like the horse or the elephant that will remain the servant of man because it is unaware of its superior strength.

To insist on believing in eternity or the permanence of the "soul", the "ego", the "I" or the "self" is therefore to run counter to the rythm of nature and to delude oneself. It is this delusion of a "self" associated with the five *khandha* process that gives rise to craving, the cause of rebirth and sorrow. But he who treads the "way" which leads to the end of the "ego" or "I" conception will attain understanding of the wisdom wherein self, as something separate, can have no abiding place, a truth which will enable him to extinguish *tanhā* or craving and eliminate *avijjā* or ignorance and thus free himself from the clutches of greed, anger and delusion, which means liberation from rebirth.

According to the Teaching, there is, in the absolute sense, neither real ego nor real individual nor real existence of the *khandha*, because self-consciousness is conditioned and can arise only when there is co-existence of the following conditions:

- 1) The sense-organ concerned must be intact.

- 2) The sense-object must come within the sphere of operation of that sense-organ.
- 3) Simultaneously, attention must bear on the conjunction.

“O Bhikkhus! A Bhikkhu who wisely establishes himself on seven footings through contemplation based on the Three Signs of Being is, the Tathāgata declares, one who has done all that is to be done, one who has overcome passion, one who is among those disciples who have reached the highest attainment.

“O Bhikkhu! A Bhikkhu, who wisely establishes himself on seven footings, knows the real nature of form, feeling, cognition, impression and consciousness. He knows their simultaneous origination. He knows their cessation. He knows the way that leads to their final disappearance. He knows their worth as givers of happiness and pleasure. He knows the misery that would accumulate if one were to cling to them. He knows the way to detach his affection for them.

“What, O Bhikkhus, is the form-group (*rūpa*)? The four root-elements (*mahā-bhūta* or *dhātu*) and corporeality depending on them. Because ‘nutriment’ (*ahāra*: material food, contact, will-to-live and consciousness) is continually renewed, forms come into being anew simultaneously. When nutriment ceases, forms cease to arise anew.

“What, O Bhikkhus, is the feeling-group (*vedanā*)? There are six kinds of feeling: due to eye-contact, to ear-contact, to nose-contact, to tongue-contact, to body-contact and to mind-contact. They depend on contact. Whenever there is contact between the sense-organ and the external, feeling arises simultaneously; but when contact ceases, feeling vanishes.

"What, O Bhikkhus, is the cognition-group (*saññā*)? There are six classes of cognition (the inclination to cognise the various sensations experienced as belonging to a permanent ego): cognition of visual objects, of sounds, of smells, of tasty matter, of tangibles and of ideas. Their arising is dependent on and takes place simultaneously with contact. When contact ceases, cognition disappears.

"What, O Bhikkhus, is the impression-group (*sankhāra*)? There are six classes of volitional mental-activities (*cetanā*): with regard to visual objects, to sounds, to odours, to tastes, to tangibles and to ideas. They depend on contact. When there is contact, they come into being, and when contact ceases, they pass away.

"What, O Bhikkhus, is the consciousness-group (*viññāna*)? There are six kinds of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mind-consciousness. They are all dependent on contact. Whenever a sense-object comes within the range of perception, the corresponding consciousness arises. When contact of the sense-object with the sense-organ ceases, consciousness fades away.

"What now, O Bhikkhus, is the way that leads to the ultimate cessation of form, feeling, cognition, impression and consciousness? Verily, it is the Noble Eightfold Path: Right understanding, Right resolution, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindedness and Right meditation.

"The worth of form or of feeling, or of cognition, or of impression, or of consciousness, O Bhikkhus, is the happy and pleasant sensation depending on each of them.

"Each of the five aggregates, O Bhikkhus, is an impermanent quality, bound up with sorrow, and cannot therefore remain the same. This is the misery attached to each of them.

"Destruction of all attachment to them and the avoidance of further affection towards them, O Bhikkhus, is liberation from suffering.

"O Bhikkhus! Any Bhikkhu or anyone who has really penetrated the true nature of form, of feeling, of cognition, of impression and of consciousness, penetrated their simultaneous origination, penetrated their cessation, penetrated the way that leads to their ultimate cessation, penetrated their worth as giver of happiness and pleasure, penetrated the misery attached to them and penetrated the way to effect complete detachment from them, and who lives in accordance with the unfoldment, for the purpose of inducing aversion, for the purpose of subduing passion, and for the final aim of putting an end to the *khandha*, he is truly a disciple of this Noble Teaching.

"What now, O Bhikkhus, is penetration based on the Three Signs of Being? Here, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu regularly practises contemplation on the sense-perceptions or sense-consciousness or sensations and understands, according to reality and true wisdom, that they are made up of 'elements' (*dhātu*), just mind-substances produced by the '12 bases' (*salāyatana*) and consequently they are impermanent, are bound up with sorrow and are egoless.

"O Bhikkhus! The Tathagata declares that he who has thus accomplished has reached the highest attainment. He is devoid of attachment and clinging. He has done all that is to be done. He is no longer bound to Samsāra. There is no more *khandha* and their sorrows for him to transcend."¹

¹ *Sattatthāna Sutta, Samyutta Nikāya, Khandhavaravagg.* Translated from the Thai version.

Human life is the main stage in the universal process

Through meditation, the Buddha acquired the greatest power of inner sight, and he made use of that power to recall his own past lives, which in turn enabled him to realise the truth about heaven, Brahma and rebirth. But as such truth is beyond the limits of the intellect and will only be understood by personal experience, the Buddha refrained from enlarging upon the subject and was content to clarify the method by which all, including the illiterate and the dullards, who have succeeded in driving away "fear" from their hearts and are thus not afraid to lose their minds in the void, can learn the truth for themselves. He who once manages, either with or without the help of an *Achāra* (teacher), to visualize his own previous lives, will know that the life of sentient beings may be likened to travelling on a journey, and that the various stages of existence in heaven and Brahma are comparable to numerous different stations, the common characteristic of which, with the exception of the end-station, is the series of arrivals and departures. Human life, on the one hand, can be likened to the intermediate stations in that there may be, at any moment, fresh arrivals through the wicket of birth as well as quitters who depart through the gate of death; but, on the other hand, it is different from the others in that it is the main station, the only one from which a non-stop route leads to the end of the journey. Before enlightenment and through lack of right understanding, the Buddha himself had to travel to and from that main station for countless lives before he discovered the direct route.

Because of this and for the sake of mankind, the Buddha emphasized that human life is the main stage in the universal process and is the only stage from which enlightenment and Nibbāna can be reached. In this respect, human beings are superior even to gods. To be born a human being is therefore deemed extremely fortunate, because enlightenment can be attained from none of the other states of existence. Should the opportunity afforded in our present lives be unheeded and lost, a million years may pass before we find ourselves once more born into the human state. One should realise that being born a human being is a rare and not a common occurrence and one should thus be grateful to one's parents not only for their tender care but for having given one an opportunity to fulfil one's supreme duty and free oneself forever from suffering. Concurrently, one should realise the urgency of training oneself to live rightly, with a view to finding out the true purpose of life by covering as much of the Holy Path as is possible in one's life for such an opportunity is rare and may not recur for many *kalpa* (aeons). As the duration of the present life is so uncertain, it is high time that man should give thought to the fact that leading a life in which the baser instincts derived from his own mistaken notion of a self or ego are permitted to destroy its natural rythm and harmony will never lead to enlightenment. For a life of unsatiable fancies, desires, impulses and passions defies the laws of *kamma* and *paticcasamuppāda* and is therefore bound to *samsāra*, the wheel of rebirth, which means repeated sufferings.

“Rise! sit up! What advantage is there in your sleeping? To men ailing, pierced by the darts of sorrow, what sleep indeed can there be? Sloth is defilement, to be ever heedless is defilement! By earnestness and wisdom root out your darts of sorrow!”¹

Right meditation is the key to the riddles of life

In the light of the Teaching of the Buddha, each individual man is an integral part of this universe and each has a common supreme duty to fulfil (the attainment of Nibbāna). He is in reality only a manifested product of nature that comes into existence through the union of thought-forces or mind-substances (feeling, cognition, impression and consciousness) with matter to form a gross embodiment containing eyes, ears, nose, tongue, tactile organs and mind. He is subjected to the universal law of *paticcasamuppāda* and the omnipotent law of *kamma*. He, therefore, can neither remain absolutely still nor retain his existence forever (*anicca*). He is bound to undergo changes—by becoming this becoming that and ceasing to be this and ceasing to be that—until he realizes that those changes are so many forms of suffering (*dukkha*), the outcome of his own refusal to admit the nothingness of himself (*anattā*), and until he next makes a decision out of his own free-will to entirely relinquish the desire or craving for a permanent self (*tanhā*) which binds him through ignorance (*avijjā*) to *samsāra*, the wheel of rebirth, then only can he fulfil the common purpose of life (*Nibbāna*).

Ignorant attachment to “self” is thus that which urges man to continue to employ his free-will to preserve

¹ *Udāna Sutta*, 1, 4. Dr. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism* p. 132.

his sense of separateness and, consequently, is that which keeps him chained to material bodies through rebirth. Since the beginningless beginning, man has been deluding himself into thinking that everytime he thinks, speaks and acts as he does, it is a permanent self within his gross embodiment that prompts him to do so at its own discretion. But in the absolute sense, however, no thought can ever arise without external causes or stimulants. That is to say, upon contact with the outer world—colours, sounds, odours, tasty matter, tangibles and ideas—by way of the six sense-organs of the physical body, the mind-substances will mutually act and react upon one another, giving rise to sensations, conscious or unconscious, which have the property of dissipating themselves through the bodily organs out into space in the form of thought, speech and action. Those that fail to manifest themselves immediately will remain conglomerated within to undergo gradual self-dissipation and keep the various organs of the physical body functioning. Repetition of the deeds means accumulation within the mind of those sensations or *kamma* or mind-substances or thought-forces, and it is those, produced in terms of the “promanent self or I”, which, failing to disperse themselves, leave the material body at death, together with other residual mind-substances, to await the opportune moment to re-manifest themselves again and again within human embodiments, until they become all-pervading. Consequently man, in this light, is not an identity, but a stage in the process of becoming, and the real significance of his so-called free-will is the fact that he is only at liberty to make his own decision as

to when he should discard the self so as to fulfil the common purpose.

Any lengthier explanation as to how rebirth can take place when there is no permanent self to be reborn would probably be redundant, because such condition concerns consciousness which is different in different individuals and which often varies even in the same individual. In fact, fundamental truths concerning the consciousness of existence, such as rebirth, lie above the realm of comparability and relative values and are therefore beyond the plane of the intellect. They are not facts which can be observed in the ordinary way; they belong to a class of cosmic forces which must be directly experienced by one's own powers and not merely understood in theory.

When scientific knowledge fails us, we should not have recourse to superstition, because an explanation by way of some superhuman agency or agencies is inimical to the advancement of knowledge and to the attainment of enlightenment and wisdom, as it blocks the way to further inquiries. We should look within for the solution. It is indeed possible for each individual man, sitting in solitude in the silence, to learn properly to "tune in" to the universal wisdom and develop his "inner eye" "to see and to know." The way to do it is by meditation, the sincere perseverant practice of which will not only enable one to contact that very wisdom that propels this universe and lead one on to the conviction that suffering is a truth, but will also in time induce one who possesses morality (*sila*) and perseverance (*viriya*) to tread the Middle Way for the purpose of freeing oneself from the Ten Fetters that bind all human beings to the "Wheel of Rebirth."

The ten fetters are known in Pali as *dasa-samyojana*. They are ten evil states of mind which give rise to that consciousness of the individual life stream as the self, the ego, the "I", the soul, which opposes the natural progress of human life on earth towards Nibbāna. They are here below :

1. Belief in the permanent identity of the ego (*sakkāya-ditthi*) is that false-consciousness in man that he has an immortal as well as eternal soul which he is powerless to save and therefore is bound to await deliverance at the hands of a supreme personal soul; from that belief arises the self-delusion that the best one can do is to do good on earth for the purpose of sending the soul to heaven after bodily death to await deliverance.
2. Doubt (*vicikicchā*) is that state of uncertainty in the mind which makes one doubt the real nature of the self-accomplishment of the Buddha, as well as the efficacy of his doctrine and his method of self-salvation. Doubt promotes reluctance to test the method for oneself, which naturally keeps that powerful faculty of self-reliance, including will-power, dormant and inactive.
3. Faith in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies (*śīlabbata-parāmāsa*) is the wrong conviction that rites and ceremonies can nullify the consequences of one's own evil *kamma* already committed or about to be committed, and produce good *kamma* without one having to exert oneself—which is as helpful as somebody else's eating when we feel hungry.

4. Unsatiabie sensual desires (*kāma-rāga*) that is to say that lust of the eyes and that desire of the flesh, those low desires which are allowed to dominate the mind, that habit of yielding to the appeal of sex ; that lack of self-discipline to direct one's own thought and imagination and use them to their full advantage towards one's own virtuous end.
5. Ill-will and hatred (*patigha*) are all those ill-feelings towards others which have accumulated in one's own heart, and which are ever ready to surge out revengefully by prompting us to plan out harmful deeds which will equitably trace the reaction back to its producer.
6. Love of life on earth (*rūpa rāga*), the clinging to material existence, to the material body and worldly happiness, dictated by the six senses, in spite of the knowledge that they are transitory and always accompanied by disappointment and misery.
7. Desire for life in heaven (*arūpa rāga*), the desire to become angels in heaven after the death of the body, prompted by fear of punishments in hell and the desire to enjoy heavenly pleasure, in spite of one's own doubt as to whether all that which one seeks to run away from is truly absent from heaven.
8. Pride (*maṇa*) is the feeling of superiority over others, as if the whole universe belonged to one or to one's own clique only, giving rise to prejudice and selfishness,—the two major causes of most of the misery to be found all over the globe, traceable to ignorance of the truth that

"Victory breeds hatred, for the defeated live miserably. The tranquil only, heedless of victory and defeat, can live in peace."¹

9. Irresolution (*uddhacca*) is the quality of the wayward mind which prompts one to wander from one subject to another and is easily led astray by any odd whim and fancy as also by fear.
10. Ignorance (*avijjā*) is that clouding which arises in the mind from yielding to temptations and becomes an obscurant, blurring the truth of the purpose of life from view, making one forget the supreme duty, which is the common duty of all human beings, irrespective of sex, colour and creed.

"He who is freed from 'I and me',
Attaches not to mind and body,
Grieves not for lack of that he hasn't got.
He, indeed, is the fearless one who trembles not."²

"Meditation is to wisdom its source.
Without meditation wisdom wanes.
Thus knowing which is gain and which is loss.
Let him strive if wisdom is his aim."³

"Meditation in a quiet recess
On the rise and fall of aggregates,
To the knowing one, this is joy and happiness,
For face to face is he with the deathless state."⁴

It is an accepted fact among Eastern Buddhist adepts that meditation as taught by the Buddha is the only

1 *Dhammapada*, XV, 201.

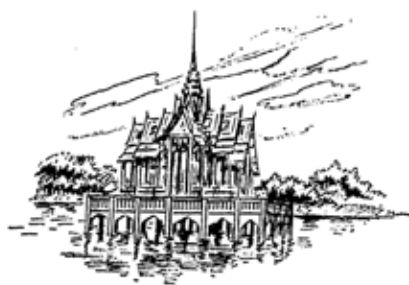
2 *Ibid*, XXV, 367.

3 *Dhammapada*, XX, 282.

4 *Ibid*, XXV, 374.

way, not only to mental peace while living in this world of turmoil, but also to hasten the fulfilment of the common purpose. It is not then out of place to add :

Let us be heedful, let us make a start,
Let us yield not to greed, anger and delusion ;
Let us give freely, heedless of reward.
Let us keep the precepts and take up meditation !



CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTRINE OF BODHIPAKKIYADHAMMA

This part of the sutta is to explain that it is possible, through mind-control, not only to contact the universal wisdom and acquire insight, but also to realise the purpose of life; it is also to expose the various mental conditions which the mind has to experience, stage by stage, before it can attain Nibbāna and become free forever from sufferings :

Man is only a "body-dweller" (kāyānupassanā-satipatthāna)

Life is the dearest possession of men. In one form or another, they try to enjoy it by every possible means, as wealth, as happiness, as power and even as ordinary existence, to which they cling with all their might. Now, it is common experience that the more one tries to lay a firm grip on life, the faster it slips away from one's hold and the more one is reminded of its perplexing mysteries. Nay, the faster it slips away, the quicker one yields to fretting and worry, and the more one is prone to become a victim of despair. Yet man remains subservient to misconception and never learns that peace lies, not in the satisfaction, but in the absence of desire. But there comes a time when he will realise that he is only a "body-dweller" and that all he prized in life, such as knowledge, riches, power and the most highly prized of all, his body, which he has been in the habit of claiming for his own, as if he possessed it or was actually it, cannot be taken with him. By then, it is too late.

It is therefore necessary for man to undergo a self-imposed process of re-education. He needs to understand rightly that a man is really not a man, not a separate entity. He is called by various names in various languages, but there is nothing of the "self" belonging to him. For man is only another name for evolution; he has no beginning, he has no end. He is ever becoming, and hence, under whatever angle he is regarded, he is incomplete in expression. Like every thing else in nature, he must pass through a series of changes, and in his particular case the changes correspond to infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, maturity, old age, decay and death. His so-called individual existence is in fact but a mere process of "bodily and mental" (*nāma-rūpa*) phenomena, which from immemorial times were going on before his apparent last birth, and which also after death will continue for immeasurable periods of time.

Just as that which we designate by the name of "chariot" has no existence apart from the combination of axles, wheels, shafts and so forth, or the word "house" is merely a convenient designation for various materials put together after a certain fashion so as to enclose a portion of space and there is no separate house entity in existence, that which we call a "being", or an "individual", or a "person", or a "man", or by the name of "I", is nothing but a changing combination of physical and psychical phenomena and has no real existence in itself. Scientifically, the body is only a gross embodiment of *khandha*, containing but latent heat and cosmic energies locked up within matter in all its three states, solid, liquid and

gaseous, and which cannot be prevented from decaying. It is part and parcel of nature and does not belong to anyone. But ignoring the truth that attachment to body is a hindrance to one's own progress towards final liberation from suffering, man continues to cling to it and to every part of it—hair, nails, hands, etc., and believes that they belong to him and constitute his ego. Even so, he takes delight in casting away parts of himself every now and then—by trimming off parts of the unwanted nails almost weekly and by having his hair cut when need arises. At the same time, he silently complains that his own body is beyond his control and always gives him cause to worry—an ache here, a pain there; now it is this tooth that aches, and very often the whole body becomes tired out through fatigue. It is true that with the aid of science man has made many great discoveries which have improved his health and prolonged his life against diseases; but he should not let this delude him into thinking that he has really become the master of his body and shall soon be able to live in that body indefinitely.

“What is unreal they imagine as real, and what is real they consider as unreal—they, who abide in the pasture-ground of wrong thinking, shall never arrive at the real.”¹

Every doctor now realises that the human body is very similar in many respects to that of other mammals, such as lions, tigers, dogs and monkeys. Even with the very lowliest animal, man's body has something in common for, beneath the opaque covering of man and of all animals

1 *Dhammapada*, I, 11.

known as "skin", there are hidden millions of living cell-units. Each of these cells has a life of its own, requiring food, air and the right kind of environment in which to live that life and each has to perform a duty of importance to the great super-unit—the human life as a whole.

It follows that the bones of various sizes, bound together at joints by ligaments and tendons, which determine and maintain the shape of the body, and all the delicate tissues and vital organs hidden under the skin, such as heart, liver, kidneys, nerves, etc., are all made up of conglomerates of countless tiny organisms of different kinds, each of which has the ability to become father and mother to itself through continuously splitting into halves. These millions of minute living entities, or living cells, are dependent for life on eating and breathing as man does, so they have to be kept adequately and constantly supplied with nutriment and air, and the waste products resulting from their vital activities have to be constantly cleared away by circulating blood; otherwise they would be poisoned by toxins with the result that the body would become exposed to diseases and finally cease to function altogether, and the being would die.

Thus "man" who laughs and plays, who has his own busy work in his human community, who enjoys the beauty of the world and who can, through imagination, begin to feel, although he cannot yet understand, the beauty of the great cosmos beyond, derives his power, indeed, owes his very existence to these invisible individuals, all living in ceaselessly active communities. And it is these microscopic cell-units beneath each man's

skin, arising out of units of an even more infinitesimal order—the atoms, protons and electrons, etc., and the “wisdom” behind them all, that make him feel himself to be the real “I.”

It is commonly retorted that, of course, one sees all that; but, as a matter of fact, it is the ordinary waking mind which sees and admits it, not that part of the mind which is the cause of most of the actions composing one's daily life and the thoughts which fill one's mind. This is not enough. It is high time for man to learn to “contemplate” on the body and its parts, in order to impress the inner-consciousness until it realises the truth that all of man is, beyond dispute, *anicca*, *anattā* and a prey to *dukkha*, and that within his body there are new births, new growths and decays, and new deaths taking place at each moment until the final hour, when vocal and other physical movements of the gross body finally stop and he dies.

Man is on this earth to fulfil the supreme duty which is common to all and which he himself, on his own part, has neglected and left unaccomplished for a very very long time. To succeed, however, perseverance in contemplation on the body (*kāyānupassanā-satipatthāna*) is necessary, until man cannot help feeling the “not-self” of his very body and always remembers that he is only a “body-dweller.”

The method of practice, along the line set forth in the *Mahā-satipatthāna Sutta*, for acquiring inner conviction of the impersonal nature of the body and, at the same time, for destroying the affection felt for it, starts with ‘mindfulness on one's own breath’ (*ānāpāna-sati*), to

induce concentration for the purpose of arousing mental awareness into activity. When out-breathing and in-breathing have become very fine and consciousness of breath has almost disappeared, the mental awareness is to be directed towards 'the four postures of the body' or 'the movements of various parts of the body', or 'the 32 attributes of the body', or 'the four elements composing the body', or 'a decaying corpse one day dead, or two days dead, or three days dead, distended, black and filled with putrid matter', or successively towards all the above-mentioned subjects, with a view to realising the fact that the body is made up of no abiding components, no self, no ego, because it really belongs to no individual man and that, whether one likes it or not, one's body is destined to become a burden, and must, immediately at death, go through various stages of decomposition until the bones finally disintegrate into dust.

"A Bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body in this way:

"Here, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu retires to a forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a quiet spot, sits down cross-legged, with body erect and contemplative faculty alert, and contemplates on his out and in breathings:

"Breathing out long, he knows, 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in long, he knows, 'I breathe in long.' Breathing out short, he knows, 'I breathe out short.' Breathing in short, he knows, 'I breathe in short.'

"He then trains himself: 'I shall be aware of all disquietness of my body as I breathe out', and trains himself thus: 'I shall be aware of all disquietness of my body as I breathe in.'

“And he further trains himself: ‘My whole body shall be still and at peace as I breathe out’, and trains himself thus: ‘My whole body shall be still and at peace as I breathe in’

“Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body , mindful of the arising and passing away of the body phenomena. He is aware that ‘the body is there’, but he dwells unattached, without any clinging to it nor to anything else in this world.

“Further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu walking knows: ‘I am walking’; standing he knows: ‘I am standing’; sitting he knows: ‘I am sitting’; and lying down he knows: ‘I am lying down’; and whatsoever is the posture of his body he knows that posture

“Further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu advancing and turning back, looking in front and looking backward, bending and stretching forth his arm, he is aware of what he is doing Eating, chewing, drinking and tasting evacuating his bowels, urinating walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, talking and keeping silent, he is aware of what he is doing

“Further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates this body, which is enveloped by the skin, upwards from the sole of the feet and downwards from the crown of the head, as containing hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinew, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach, excreta, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, lymph, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine, grey and white matter of the brain. Thus, he dwells contemplating each of these parts of the body, is mindful that they are all subject to change, are related to suffering, and so do not really belong to any man,

“And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates the body by way of its component elements ‘This body is composed of solid element, liquid element, heat element, and gaseous elements..... Thus he lives contemplating the body in the body.....mindful of the arising and passing away of the body phenomena. He is aware that ‘the body is there’, but he dwells unattached, without any clinging to it nor to anything else in this world.....”

“And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body dead one, two, or three days; swollen, blue-black and festering, thrown in the charnel-ground, and compares it with his own body thus: ‘Verily, my body also has this nature, and it cannot escape this destiny’.....

“And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body, putrefied and thrown in the charnel-ground, being eaten by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals or by different kinds of worms, and compares it with his own body thus: ‘Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny’.....

“And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body, thrown in the charnel-ground and reduced to a skeleton with only some flesh and blood, held together by tendons, and compares it with his own body thus: ‘Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny’.....

“And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body, reduced to a skeleton, bare of flesh but smeared with blood and having its tendons intact, and compares it with his own body thus: ‘Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny’.....

"And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body.....consisting of a skeleton held together by tendons, without flesh and blood, and compares it with his own body thus: 'Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny'.....

"And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body.....already reduced to loose bones, scattered in all directions—the bones of the hands in one place, the bones of the feet, of the shins, of the thighs, of the pelvis, of the spine, and the skull in various places—and compares it with his own body thus: 'Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny'.....

"And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body with its bones the colour of a conch-shell, and compares it with his own body thus: 'Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny'.....

"And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body with its bones rotted with age and scattered in heaps, and compares it with his own body thus: 'Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny'.....

"And further, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu contemplates on a body with its bones putrid and crumbling into dust, and compares it with his own body thus: 'Verily, my body also has this nature and it cannot escape this destiny'.....

"Thus, he lives contemplating the body in the body. He contemplates internally (on his own body), or externally (on the bodies of others), or both internally and externally (on both his own body and the bodies of others), mindful of the

fact that the bodies and their component parts have to undergo their natural processes of composition and dissolution and do not belong to anyone. He is aware that 'the body is there', but he dwells unattached, clinging not to it nor to anything else in this world."¹

"Attentively scrutinize thyself by thyself. Thus self-guarded and mindful, O Bhikkhu, wilt thou live happily."²

Senses are illusory (*Vedanānupassanā-satipatthāna*)

Man is ignorant of his true nature. He unthinkingly allows his reason to be led astray and deluded by these eighteen realms of sense, through looking at the world "as it appears" and not "as it is". He is just like a sheep in a flock, and continues to deceive himself through his own senses, the way he carries on life. He very often does not "see" what he "is looking at". Let us take an example: when he looks at the sun and sees an orb about the size of a dinner-plate, he does not take the trouble to think of its true nature—to realise that its apparent dinner-plate size as seen by the eyes is illusory and unreal, and due to the sun being millions of miles away. In this way, man continues all through life to yield to the dictates of his senses and register within himself false ideas as to the reality of things, without knowing that such habits are detrimental to his own life.

It is time he should realise that all his sensations depend on an intelligent interpretation of what is conveyed to the sense-organs. It is particularly true of sight. For

¹ *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna sūta* — *Dīgha Nikāya*, Translated from the Thai version.

² *Dhammapada*, XXV, 379.

instance, while on a country walk, a seemingly distant object may be taken for a shimmering lake, while it may be only a piece of glass nearby, or we may imagine that a couple of herons are a pair of horses. Those herons, when we think of them as horses, appear to have all the attributes of horses — four legs and all the prancing; but directly we apply field glasses or approach closer, the likeness to horses vanishes and we see that the objects are two-legged herons.

However, not only sight, but all the six senses deceive,—betrayers all of them; and yet man permits himself to remain under their dominion. All can verify for themselves the truth that the senses are really not reliable as conveyances of sensations. If we touch our lips or touch the tips of the fingers or the tip of the tongue, while the eyes are closed, with the two points of a pair of compasses, they can be recognized as separate points even though they are placed very closely together. If, however, they are applied to the back of the hand, or the back, or shoulders, or loins, they must be placed very wide apart if they are not to give the impression of a single point of contact.

The genuineness of sense-deception can also be ascertained by filling three basins in a row with water at different temperatures; i. e. by filling one of the end basins with water as hot as it is safe to touch, the middle basin with lukewarm water and the other end basin with ice-cold water. Then dip the right hand into one end basin, the left hand into the other end basin, and after having kept each hand immersed in the hot and cold water for a few

seconds, put both of them into the middle basin containing lukewarm water and note the results. To the hand that has been in the ice-cold water, the lukewarm liquid will feel hot, whilst to the hand that has been in the hot water it will feel cold. It thus becomes obvious that recognition of heat and cold by the sense is merely a relative sensation, measurable on a comparative basis only, and depending upon the condition of the hand just before it comes into direct contact with the lukewarm water.

Thus, man should always be on his guard so that what he senses and stores in his memory be only right knowledge and not those things that will lead him into temptation, tending to distract the mind and weaken its meditative power. He should always bear in mind the basic fact that the power to perceive the nature of anything that comes within the range of his sense-organs does not belong to his senses, because the senses have no perception power and cannot therefore recognize the true nature of that object. The sense-organs are merely devices for registering contacts. They are dependent on nerves and nerve endings with highly developed cellular structures. The actual nerves themselves are not capable directly of perceiving the right feelings or sensations caused by contacts. Their duty is to translate the impetus of the contact into pain or pleasure and then convey the message to the reasoning brain which, according to the Teaching, is but the 'cognition' part of the mind, or the third aggregate of existence. They cannot give any idea of the true nature of the contact or of the object causing the contact. The correct nature of the contact, such as

softness, hardness, light, colour, shape, sound, etc., along with the sensation of pleasantness or unpleasantness or of indifference, is reported to the brain by the nerve endings, whilst the reasoning brain (*saññā*) itself is responsible for interpreting the object of perception to the consciousness and turns the sensation into emotion.

For his own weal, man should therefore endeavour to sense things as they are and not as they appear, and thus keep his feelings under control, especially those profuse emotions prompted by greed, anger and delusion, for if he does not control them by reason and wisdom in their very first stage of manifestation, they will control him and materialize only to his own grief and suffering. He should, above all, drop that habit of holding on to the 'feelings', derived from contact of his six sense-organs with sense objects, as to an "I" that can never cease to be or as belonging to the 'self' or 'ego', for such habit is a stumbling-block on the road to his own salvation.

Although all the informations we receive from the eyes, ears, tongue, nose or skin, or from inside the body itself depend on nerves that are made of microscopic living cells which convey the stimulus to the conscious brain or 'cognition' part of the mind, yet the nerves by themselves cannot directly carry the right sensation. They can only register and report the feeling of pain. It is the specialized nature of the complicated groups of the protective and associated cells surrounding the nerve endings that convey the stimulus to consciousness through special nerves, such as the optic nerves of the eyes. Thus, the sense of sight is due to the specialized cells of the eye being particularly

sensitive to the very delicate contact of those waves in the air which we call light; our sense of smell is due to cells specially sensitive to the wave lengths of various aromas, just as our hearing is due to cells sensitive to the wave lengths of sound and our sense of taste to those cells that are sensitive to the chemical effects of tasty substances in solution.

A realisation of the marvellous complexity of one's own life process as dependent on those millions of minute living cells or entities should afford a convincing proof that, although the six senses are a part of man, they are not the 'real' part—not the "ego." We should, consequently, refrain from claiming consciously or unconsciously, the feeling or sensation that keeps on arising and disappearing within us as our true self, and the best way to detach ourselves from clinging to this wrong view of the "self" is to practise contemplation on feelings (*vedanānupassanā-satipatthāna*) as often as possible, until we fully realise the true meaning of the "not-self" of our own feelings.

"How, O Bhikkhus, does a Bhikkhu dwell contemplating feelings in feelings?

"Here, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu knows when a pleasant feeling arises within him, 'I experience a pleasant feeling'; when a painful feeling arises within him, he knows, 'I experience a painful feeling'; when experiencing a neither pleasant nor painful feeling, he knows, 'I experience a neither pleasant nor painful feeling.'

"When a pleasant worldly feeling arises within him, he knows, 'I experience a pleasant worldly feeling'; when a pleasant spiritual feeling arises within him, he knows, 'I experience a pleasant spiritual feeling.'

"When a painful worldly feeling arises within him, he knows, 'I experience a painful worldly feeling'; when a painful spiritual feeling arises within him, he knows, 'I experience a painful spiritual feeling.'

"When experiencing a neither pleasant nor painful worldly feeling, he knows, 'I experience a neither pleasant nor painful worldly feeling'; when experiencing a neither pleasant nor painful spiritual feeling, he knows, 'I experience a neither pleasant nor painful spiritual feeling.'

"Thus, he lives contemplating feelings in feelings . . . , mindful of the arising and disappearing of each of the various feelings. He is aware that 'feeling exists within him', but he dwells unattached, without any clinging to it nor to anything else in this world."¹

"He who conquers himself alone is a nobler victor than he who conquers a thousand thousand men on the battle field."²

Thought is the "Moulder of Destiny" (*Cittānupassanā-satipathāna*)

Far back into the mists of time, man, as he evolved out of the animal stage, made deductions from the phenomena about him. He saw those processes recur repeatedly and associated them with cause and effect.

¹ *Mahā-satipathāna Sutta*.

² *Dhammapada*, VIII, 103,

From those outside phenomena, he arrived at conclusions which generation after generation regarded as laws of being. Through constant yielding to the faculty of imitation, not only his outer but his inner life became based on them, and he thus automatically defined himself and set limits to his growth and evolution. He became so used to taking everything for granted that many self-contradictory theories were accepted as final and true, especially the belief that either his body or his senses or else his mind is the "ego", and that the "ego" is a permanent entity, but devoid of the power to save itself and compelled therefore to await deliverance at the behest of a supreme personal soul. Succeeding generations have continued to crystallize this misconception, because it is much easier to accept ready made dogma than to delve into the recesses of the mind for other views or ideas.

The widespread failure to live in peace we see everywhere around us is due, to a very great extent, to this false view of the "ego" which promotes self-interest and, consequently, wrong thinking that tends to separate the individuals, the groups, the nations, and thus constitutes the main cause of racial prejudice, hatred and oppression, with their final outcome of violence, weapons and killing.

According to the *Dhammapada*, Verses, 1 and 2, the Buddha proclaimed that:

"Mind is the fount of (all human) conditions.
Mind is the originator; and they are mind-made.

If one speaks or acts with an impure mind
pain follows one as the wheel follows the hoof of
the ox; but if one speaks or acts with a pure mind,
then happiness follows one as one's own shadow."

This means that mind is made up of thoughts, and that thought is not only the criterion of all deeds, because it creates feeling which is energy that must find its own release in action, but also the moulder of destiny. Every-time we think, our physical body is affected and a thread of our future life is spun.

We have already learned that every thought produces *kamma*, and *kamma*, being a force, must find embodiments in which to continue to manifest itself after it has been produced until its potential is spent; it will be obvious that the immediate embodiments available are the various organs of the body. In its manifestations, thought first gives rise to 'feeling' which in turn produces emotion that will at once undergo its own processes of dissipation into space through the whole of the material body, and thus affect it for good or ill. For example, we all know how our hearts beat faster when we are excited; how abusive or harsh words pour out from our mouths and our arms and legs are aroused into action when we are angry; we get hot in shame, cold in terror, and so on. It is true that most of the body's functions are carried on involuntarily, without our conscious control over them, but we should realise that every motivated thought of ours will affect them adversely or beneficially.

On receiving news of the death of someone very dear to us, we weep. The thought of the dear one stirs our emotion which, in turn, causes the tear ducts to open and tears to flow out. But the news can be false. Hence it is not the actual death, but the "thought" of death, that caused the tears.

Thinking of a lemon makes one's mouth water. The mouth is normally moist, but as soon as the mental attitude is taken up concerning the sour taste of the lemon, it stimulates the salivary glands and prompts them to make saliva from the fluids existing in the body. A thought does it, but at the expense of some other function of the body.

Similarly, a thought of jealousy will cause an over-secretion of gall and jaundice results. It follows of course that the opposite emotion will have an opposite effect, and the stronger the will or motive behind the thought, the greater the effect, because the *kamma* produced will be of greater intensity.

Indeed, very few people know that every thought has its culmination in action of some kind. Nothing is done in vain in nature, and a thought which does not culminate in something is unthinkable. "I am not feeling fit to-day"; the thought involves hypnotic suggestion that will adversely affect the working of our human machine, for it is a reflection of the fact that the thinker is not thinking right, that is to say he does not do the thinking without self-identification with the factors of phenomenal being. He simply follows the dictate of the emotion and expresses the feeling as if it were his own or as if it were his "ego", in spite of the knowledge that emotion fluctuates from minute to minute. Continued thinking along a given trend will result in forming habits, and from habits, moods, until those moods have become so firmly rooted in the mind that the person becomes unconscious of their existence; but the fact that he is not aware

of their existence does not prevent them from affecting him. In other words, every intentional thought will set *kamma* into action. A thought that is constructive and benevolent will purify both the mind and body, whilst a thought with a destructive quality, such as those produced by greed, hate and false belief, will defile them, and every repetition of the same thought or idea will produce the same kind of emotion and will either purify the mind and body still further or else add further defilements to them.

Man truly suffers not so much from deliberate wickedness as from lack of thought-control which leads him to rash actions and from ignorance of how to think, to feel, and to act in such a way that the higher mental faculties shall be induced to appear from the hidden depths and thus enable the mind to fall in with the universal processes of nature. The deliberate cultivation of heedfulness and thoughtfulness and wise reflection can prevent a disastrous sequence from thought to action, by preventing rashness in words and deeds and causing one to pause before making a decision; but to avoid wrong thinking due to false belief, the acquirement of wisdom is indispensable as well as courage to overcome fear of death in order to venture into the empty realm and gain release from the bondage of "self", and realise the truth that this earth and all who inhabit it, even heaven and the Brahma worlds, all possess in common the three following salient features:

Aniccālakḥhanā = impermanence

Dukkhalakḥhanā = suffering

Anattālakḥhanā = no everlasting soul

The personal "ego" or the "I" may be considered as springing from human concern about existence and non-existence. To be concerned about the existence of one's wallet usually implies the idea of its possible non-existence—that is to say it may have got lost or stolen. Similarly, to be concerned about the non-existence of an epidemic in the neighbourhood implies its possibility. Thus the repetition of "I", both verbally and mentally, is, in reality, a declaration that that particular "I" is still alive and not yet in the clutches of death. But when expressed in terms of soul-consciousness, it is indeed a self-declaration of the desire for one's own existence prompted by fear of death, as well as the affirmation of one's own clinging to a life eternal in spite of all evidence to the contrary.

It should already be self-evident that to regard the body (*rūpa*) or the feeling (*vedanā*) as the permanent "ego", the permanent "self", makes one cling to existence and thus crave endlessly for self-gratification regardless of consequences to others; likewise, the conception of the "ego", as dwelling within the mind wherein are contained thought, affection, will and all intellectual and spiritual faculties, will make one cleave to it all the more and hence very loath to let it go. The greater this attachment to the "ego", the greater the hindrance to self-progress towards self-salvation, because it is the strong chain that binds man to rebirth and consequently to suffering. There will be no hope of deliverance until the chain is snapped.

It is therefore necessary, for one's own progress as well as for the progress of the world at large towards

peaceful living, to adopt a different attitude towards what is usually regarded as truth. So long as the cosmos is constituted as we know it, what we consider as truth can only be the appearance which things present to our sensory consciousness at a given moment or period of time. We must always think, until it becomes an ingrained habit, that we are indeed living in a phenomenal world and that all phenomenal objects which are dependent on cause and condition have no permanent existence of their own, because they are subject to the law of *paticcasamuppāda* and are consequently in a continual state of flux or "becomings" (*anicca*). The best way to learn the true meaning of right thought and the right attitude of man towards life is by turning one's steps to the inner path and reverently practise contemplation on the mind (*cittānupassanā-satipatthāna*), until one realises that thought-consciousness exists, but there is no separate self, no abiding personality or permanent soul within the mind that thinks.

"He who truly understands what is real as real, what is unreal as unreal, abides in the pasture-ground of right thoughts. He shall arrive at the real."¹

This means that once the mind is accustomed to look at things from the standpoint of "no permanent self", man will no longer be content to confine himself to the old ruts. He will no longer feel bound, as he used to do, to the surface of things. His horizon has been widened and it is on this extended outlook that his vision rests. He will not be content to accept the old standard of things and the

¹ *Dhammapada*, I, 12.

thought consciousness will be centred on the great within, so that wisdom shall be his and his powers of apprehension shall daily unfold.

“And how, O Bhikkhus, does a Bhikkhu live contemplating (thought) consciousness in consciousness?”

“Here, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu is aware of the changing nature of his (thought) consciousness: whether it is of passion or free from passion; whether it is of hatred or free from hatred; whether it is of delusion or free from delusion; whether it is of shrunken nature or free from shrunken nature; whether it is of distracted nature or free from distracted nature; whether it is of a developed state or of an undeveloped state; whether it is exalted or without exaltation; whether it is of attentive nature or of inattentive nature; whether it is of liberated nature or of unliberated nature.

“Thus he dwells contemplating consciousness in consciousness, mindful of the arising of thoughts, the passing away of thoughts, or both the arising and passing away of thoughts. ‘There thought exists’ thus he is aware of the nature of his own thoughts, just for the sake of knowing and awareness, and he lives unattached, clinging to naught in the world.”¹

“Verily, irrigators lead the water,
Fletcher's bend the arrow,
Carpenters shape the log,
The wise control themselves.”²

¹ *Mahā-satipatthāna Sutta*,

² *Dhammapada*, X, 145.

Wisdom and power are omnipresent (Dhammānupassanā-satipatthāna)

According to the Law of *paticcasamuppāda*, all things in the universe including the universe itself are unable to remain still and are constantly subjected to change. Modern science has now found that in every atom, electrons are in continuous, although invisible motion. It follows therefore that the universe must be full of motion, full of action and full of life; conversely, life is everywhere and not only in everything that lives. In fact, life is in every particle of the three kingdoms—mineral, vegetable, and animal. Evidence of the universality of life can be apprehended if we contemplate upon the things around us—say a tree. We cannot see life with our eye, for it is embodied in the tree. We can only see the form, colour and matter that compose the tree; but these are but the clothing with which life within the tree adorns itself; and we must admit that there is life in the tree, for we know that it is full of spirit. It is animated because it falls in with the universal process of nature. It “grows and breathes” and, just as in every part of the body of a living being such as hair, teeth, skin, muscles, nerves, etc., in its roots, branches, leaves, sprouts, flowers, etc., there are to be found, with the aid of a microscope, infinitesimal organisms, in countless number, moving about as if they were living beings.

If we contemplate further upon the same object, we have to come to the conclusion that not only is there life everywhere, but there is also wisdom as well as energy: every fruit tree knows how to make its own fruit, a mango

tree knows how to make mangoes; a cherry tree knows how to produce cherries—oysters know how to make pearls—every blade of grass knows how to build its own form and colour and besides, has the power to breath and grow. It is thus evident that there is wisdom and energy in every tree, in every blade of grass.

Now, if we will silently and reverently think it over, we will find that wisdom and power are also existent within the atoms of the mind-substances. The recent discovery of unimaginable energy locked up within the minutest particle of radio-active substances, such as uranium, plutonium, thorium and the element hydrogen, is a confirmation that such unbelievable energy, and also the wisdom that propelled the mind to its discovery, are resident within the mental atoms of the mind-substances. It is thus logical to conclude that as the mind substances constitute the pivot on which all the manifestations of the universe revolve, the universal wisdom and power are all the time in contact with the human mind. They can, therefore, be known intimately, and to know how to contact them is to have discovered the basic fact of true insight—the greatest thing that any man can know, for its perfect knowledge will make all things possible to the master of the “switch” to this unlimited universal wisdom and power.

In the ordinary way, knowledge comes to our minds through contact between the external world and the six sense-organs; e.g. knowledge of a mango tree in our garden is gained through our vision which is a faculty of the body. We are thereby conscious of a sensation of form and colour which is stored up in our memory as impression.

Every time we again look at the mango tree, our idea of the mango tree is added to the memory. And what is true of the mango tree is true of all other objects! But such knowledge of an object as gained through the senses is only a mental concept and our definition of it is but a figure of speech conceived for our own convenience and comfort. It is not real and tends to bind the mind to the realm of comparisons and relative values. Since it is restricted to the phenomenal world which is only a world of relative reality, a world of conventional truth (*sammutti sacca*), it is not true wisdom (*paññā*) and cannot therefore help the mind to penetrate the noumenal. So the best way to realise the purpose of life is through treading the "Middle way", of which the transcendence of our own consciousness of self for the purpose of contacting the universal wisdom is a part. When reality is understood through personal experience of true wisdom, unreality has no longer any foothold or attraction, with the result that rebirth comes to an end and, with the end of rebirth, suffering through running-consciousness ceases.

After experiencing it for himself, the Buddha declared to the world that each mind is in touch with other separated minds and with the universal mind of which it forms a part, and that meditation is the switch connecting human consciousness with the all-pervading wisdom of nature. He also revealed to man the greatest discovery, of inestimable value, "how to put the switch on through the right practice of meditation." Numerous disciples of his found out that when the switch was properly put on, the universal wisdom did reveal itself, for it is

self-manifesting; but it is well to remember that the Buddha did not encourage metaphysical speculation beyond the point at which it is necessary to establish conviction of the truth of suffering that will lead to recognition of the Four Noble Truths, the acknowledgment of the law of *paticca-samuppāda* and the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path that leads to Nibbāna.

It is therefore everyman's duty, if he really seeks after his own emancipation, to use every available moment to purify physically, mentally, and verbally, every idea, every sensation and every action of his life, and to practise meditation with determination for the purpose of realising the impermanence, pain and unreality of all phenomena, the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* of everything, including the various components of his own personality and also to follow it up for the discovery of "who he is and why he is here." The world will step aside for the man who knows he belongs to the other shore and firmly determines to cross over.

"Though little he reads the Sacred Texts but acts (meditates) in accordance with the Teaching, to dispel lust, hatred and delusion, until he truly knows that his mind is totally freed and clings to naught here and hereafter, he shares the blessings of a recluse—it is he who will reach the Further Shore, leaving behind the realm of passions, so hard to cross."¹

"Cleanse the heart" with right effort (*Sammappadhana*)

To embark upon this great adventure of self-discovery or self-unfoldment one must, first of all, create "that desire to know oneself" and sincerely back it up

¹ *Dhammapada*, I 20, VI 86.

with honest endeavour and preparedness to discipline oneself towards moral conduct, and then take up meditation with zeal. *Reading and dreaming about morality and meditation will not benefit anyone. The one and only way to make them bear fruit is to practise them.* When they have become really a part of us as a welcome habit, we shall unknowingly possess that "self-confidence" to meet all conditions of life that confront us.

We have seen that every personal attitude, thought, and expression produces *kamma*, and that *kamma* produced in previous existences is the moulder of the personality and mind of the producer of new *kamma* in the present life, as well as the designer of present obstacles and misfortunes for him to overcome and to bear. We also know that each and everyone of us is endowed with a will to mould his or her future destiny. It follows therefore that we must not resent, but willingly and courageously bear, the sufferings brought about by our own misdeeds because they were self-induced; at the same time, we must also be good, because men in essence are one and any deed which hurts one's neighbour or the common weal is, in fact, an injury to oneself and will constitute a hindrance to one's progress in meditation and self-unfolding. It is thus necessary to practise self-control by relentless effort, learn to direct all our feelings and emotions consciously by our own thought and never allow them to take the upper hand and lead us to violate the universal laws of *kamma* and *pativacasamuppāda*. Hence, before taking up meditation, we should "cleanse our own hearts", which may be accomplished through the observance of the following five major precepts (*pancha-sila*).

1. One should not destroy life,
2. One should not take that which is not given,
3. One should not tell lies,
4. One should not become a drunkard, but abstain from intoxicating liquors,
5. One should not commit adultery,

and by acquiring the habit of practising the "Four great right efforts" for the purpose of keeping our hearts always clean. Those are:

1. The effort to avoid evils and bad habits which have not yet been formed,
2. The effort to overcome evils and bad habits which have already been formed,
3. The effort to develop goodness and virtuous habits which have not yet been formed,
4. The effort to maintain goodness and virtuous habits which have already been formed, especially the habit of right meditation.

"The effort of avoiding, of overcoming,
Of developing and maintaining :
Such four great efforts have been shown,
By Him, the scion of the sun.
And he who firmly clings to them,
May put an end to all the pain."¹

"What now is the Effort to avoid (*samvara-padhāna*)

"There, the disciple incites his mind to avoid the arising of evil, demeritorious things, that have not yet arisen; and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

¹ *Anguttara-Nikāya* (IV) 14. Nyanatiloka, "The Word of the Buddha."

"Thus, when he perceives a form with the eye, a sound with the ear, an odour with the nose, a taste with the tongue, a contact with the body, or an object with the mind, he neither adheres to the whole, nor to its parts. And he strives to ward off that, through which evil and demeritorious things, greed and sorrow, would arise, if he remained with unguarded senses; and he watches over his senses, restrains his senses.

"Possessed of this noble 'control over the senses', he experiences inwardly a feeling of joy, into which no evil thing can enter.

"This is called the effort to avoid.

"What now is the effort to overcome (*pahāna-padhāna*)

"There, the disciple incites his mind to overcome evil and demeritorious things, that have already arisen; and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

"He does not retain any thought of sensual lust, ill-will or grief, or any other evil and demeritorious states, that may have arisen; he abandons them, dispels them, destroys them, causes them to disappear.

"This is called the effort to overcome.

"What now is the effort to develop (*bhāvana-padhāna*)

"There, the disciple incites his will to arouse meritorious conditions that have not yet arisen; and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

"Thus, he develops the "elements of enlightenment" (*bojjhangā*), bent on solitude, on detachment, on extinction, and ending in deliverance.

"This is called the effort to develop.

"What now is the effort to maintain (*anurakkhanā-padhāna*)

"There, the disciple incites his will to maintain the meritorious conditions that have already arisen; and not to let them disappear, but to bring them to growth, to maturity and to the full perfection of development; and he strives, puts forth his energy, strains his mind and struggles.

"Thus, for example, he keeps firmly in his mind a favourable object of meditation that has arisen.

"This is called the effort to maintain."¹

"If, whilst regarding a certain object, there arises on account of it, in the mind of the disciple, evil and demeritorious thoughts connected with greed, anger and delusion, then the disciple:

- (1) Should, by means of this object, gain another and wholesome object.
- (2) Or, he should reflect on the misery of these thoughts: "Unwholesome truly are these thoughts! Blamable are these thoughts! Of painful results are these thoughts!"
- (3) Or, he should pay no attention to these thoughts.
- (4) Or, he should consider the compounded nature of these thoughts.
- (5) Or, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the gums, he should, with his mind, restrain, suppress and root out these thoughts.

And in so doing these evil and demeritorious thoughts arising out of greed, anger and delusion will dissolve and disappear, and the mind will inwardly become settled and calm, composed and serene."²

"Truly, the disciple, who is possessed of conviction and has penetrated the Teaching of the Master,

¹ *Ibid.*, (IV) 13, 14.

² *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 20. *Ibid.*,

is filled with the thought: 'May rather skin, sinews and bones wither away, may the flesh and blood of my body dry up, I shall not give up my efforts so long as I have not attained whatever is attainable by manly perseverance, energy and endeavour!'

"This is called right effort."¹

Meditation is the source of magic and revelations (iddhipada)

The all important and indispensable step in the supreme endeavour towards self-unfoldment, after moral conduct, is the practice of meditation—to disperse that shadow of the "I" and look for that "light" that bathes the universe and gives it life: by closing the eyes and piercing that darkness before one, until the "light" behind the darkness appears.

Meditation is the practice of mind control or mind training: when the mind is so trained or controlled that it can be kept concentrated on an object, but for a short moment only, it is said to have attained to *khanika-samādhi*; and if the mind can be kept fixed on the object for a longer period at a time and as often as desired, it is considered to have reached that stage known as *upacāra-samādhi*; if, however, the mind can be called upon to focus on a point, it is considered to have acquired that stage of *appanā-samādhi*; but should one be able to really lose one's own mind in the void, i.e. in the universal mind which is greater than itself, and remain "perfectly still" for long periods at a time, then the mind will have attained to the state of real *samādhi*, and that person is said to know what meditation really is. It is not the same as auto-hypnosis.

¹ *Ibid.* 70.

The subject of auto-hypnosis is in a state of induced sleep and is more or less dominated by unconsciousness; he is therefore without control of his own mind, whereas in meditation, the mind attains the attitude of awareness combined with keen concentration, and the person who truly meditates is said to have entered into mental abstraction or absorption (real *samādhi*) and can remember what was experienced after coming out of the trance.

To meditate or to go into the silence of one's own being is thus to "be still." It may be helpful to practise in the same place, as nearly as possible at the same time of day or night, and in the same position. If one does not possess a special room for meditation fitted with mosquito-netting, the bed-room or any other convenient place or corner will do; but it is always advisable for laymen to meditate in the quiet of the night to avoid as far as is possible distraction by noises. Meditation should not be undertaken immediately after eating; but better on an empty stomach. Clothing must be loose, especially at the waist. It should be remembered that, during meditation, the spine must be kept perfectly straight, so that the nerve currents — the *idā* and *pingalā* — which run up each side of the spinal column may have freer play.

To "be still" is to acquire complete control over the so-called natural mental processes and thus free the mind gradually from the ten hindrances. This is usually known among truth-seekers as entering into mental absorption (*samādhi*) to allow the mind to undergo its own "natural processes", known in Pāli as "*jhāna*" and in Sanskrit as "*dhyana*", of which there are four stages :

The *first jhāna* is attained whenever the subject has overcome the five hindrances known as *nīvarana*, that is to say when he has succeeded in freeing his mind from five of the ten mental inclinations. There is, at the time, meaning during meditation, absence in the mind of lust, ill-will, torpor and drowsiness, restlessness or mental worries and doubt; but the following five are still present and are to be subdued, viz. mental uncertainty (*vitakka*), mental reflection (*vicāra*), rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and mental oneness (*citt' ekaggatā*). In other words, the subject has reached that mental condition, wherein he is temporarily unconscious of the existence of the external world—all discrimination between "a this" and "a that" has vanished. There remains only a consciousness of an infinitude of space and of the occasional presence of his own mental faculties. He is sometimes also conscious of the arising of the apprehension of the insecurity of the self which is always accompanied by a calm reflection that he is still breathing. These two faculties are known as the two prompters (*vacī-sankhāra*) of the mind, born of seclusion or fear.

The *second jhāna* is reached when the mental uncertainty and mental reflection have both subsided and vanished, together with the consciousness of infinity of space. These have been transcended, there remains only awareness of the gaining of inward tranquillisation, arising out of mental absorption (*samādhi*), and consciousness of the full presence of rapture (*pīti*), meaning that intuition has now been reached.

The *third jhāna* is acquired after rapture has faded away and ceased altogether, and in its place one experiences a sensation of unending happiness (*sukha*) and the awareness of the gaining of the oneness of mind (*citt'ekaggatā*), wherein the body is lifted up with ecstasy.

The *fourth jhāna* is entered into whenever that feeling of unending happiness which is felt with ecstasy passes away and the mind is purified—there remaining only awareness of the presence of attentiveness. The subject, at the time, dwells in equanimity—attentive and clearly conscious, and he experiences in his person that feeling of which the noble ones say: "Happy lives the man of equanimity and attentive mind." He has, at the moment, entered a realm beyond pleasure and pain—a realm wherein "form" and "space" have both ceased, a realm of "nothingness." He has subdued all "elements of being." He is oblivious of both happiness or suffering, and even of his own breath—a moment of unusual conviction and insight, followed by exaltation, and ending in abiding peace. He has reached the mental state of perfect *samādhi*, which, through diligent practice, can be entered into at will, no matter whether one is in a standing, walking, sitting, or lying posture.

"A body is there, but no living being, no individual, no woman, no man, no self, and nothing that belongs to a self; neither a person, nor anything belonging to a person."¹

Various methods are available for the acquirement of mind control, so as to prepare oneself for the supreme

¹ Pali Commentaries of Buddhaghosa, Nyanatiloka, "The Word of the Buddha."

realisation in accordance with the individual temperament. The Buddha actually gave forty subjects of meditation (*kammatthāna*) upon which one may set the mind to work for developing stillness through absorption (*jhāna*), not all of them will singly lead to the end result.

Contemplation on the "body", the "six senses", the "Buddha", the "Law", the "Holy Brotherhood", and on "Morality", etc., may be found suitable to many because they suit their temperaments; but they will only serve as a first aid towards the final goal, for they will only produce what is known as "neighbourhood concentration" (*upacāra-samādhi*).

The meditation on "loathsomeness" (*asubha-bhāvanā*), in which one is to think of the vileness of the body and of the horrors of disease and decay; how the body passes away, and how by the continued repetition of birth and death, mortals become a prey to continuous sufferings, will meet the requirement of those who have already come to possess some degree of contempt for the world; whilst the "cemetery meditation" is more or less intended for those in the power of fear and who lack courage, for anyone who dares to go and meditate in the compound of a cemetery can only do so after he has regained courage and has almost conquered fear; but it is well to remember that both those will only produce the first *jhāna*.

The following three meditations find favour with many: the meditation on "love", known as *mettā-bhāvanā*, in which one usually imagines how happy one would be if free from all sorrow, anger, and evil desires, and then focuses the wish for the same happiness for others,

including one's foes, since the latter may have been, in some former birth, one's father or friend; the meditation on "pity", known as *karunā-bhāvanā*, in which one usually imagines the unhappy condition of all beings in distress, and then awakens the sentiment of compassion and of willingness to do all in one's power to alleviate their sufferings; and the meditation on "sympathetic joy", known as *muditā-bhāvanā*, in which the thought is concentrated on the good deeds of others so as to arouse rejoicing in their joy. All these three, however, may lead to the attainment of the first three *jhānas* only.

The meditation that will lead one on to the acquirement of all the four *jhānas* are the meditation based on mindfulness with regard to "breath", known as *ānāpāna-sati*, in which one is to watch over one's own out and in-breathing, and the meditation on "equanimity" or "serenity", known as *upekkhā-bhāvanā*, in which the thought must be so controlled that the subject will remain indifferent to all worldly things, such as power and oppression, love and hate, riches and poverty, fame and contempt, youth and beauty, and even good and evil, which give only temporary happiness or sorrow. In fact, the meditation on "equanimity" or "serenity" is the most important of all meditations, because it must ultimately be reverently adhered to by all seekers after truth and *Nibbāna*, for without utter calmness and serenity of the mind there can be no enlightenment.

The tranquillisation of both body and mind, however, according to the Buddha's own words, can be achieved if one will only take up *ānāpāna-sati* meditation and put it into practice, as often as is possible and with perseverance.

"O Bhikkhus, how is one to practise *ānāpāna-sati*, so as to put an end to that unsettled, wandering and rambling habit of body and mind?

"O Bhikkhus! A Bhikkhu, in this case, retires to a forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a solitary place, sits down cross-legged, with body erect and mindfulness alert, mindful of his out and in breathings:

"In breathing out long, he is aware: 'I breathe out long', and in breathing in long, he is aware: 'I breathe in long.' In breathing out short, he is aware: 'I breathe out short,' and in breathing in short, he is aware: 'I breathe in short.'

"He then trains himself: 'I shall be aware of all disquietness of the body as I breathe out, and trains himself thus: 'I shall be aware of all disquietness of the body as I breathe in.'

"And he further trains himself: 'The body shall be still and at peace as I breathe out', and trains himself thus: 'The body shall be still and at peace as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself thus: 'I shall be aware of the feeling of rapture (*pīti*) as I breathe out', and thus: 'I shall be aware of the feeling of rapture as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'I shall be aware of the feeling of unending happiness (*sukha*) as I breathe out', and thus: 'I shall be aware of the feeling of unending happiness as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'I shall be aware of the existence of thoughts in the mind as I breathe out', and thus: 'I shall be aware of the existence of thoughts in the mind as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'The mind shall be peaceful and still as I breathe out', and thus: 'The mind shall be peaceful and still as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'I shall be aware of the natural processes of the mind as I breathe out', and thus: 'I shall be aware of the natural processes of the mind as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'The mind shall be of exalted nature as I breathe out', and thus: 'The mind shall be of exalted nature as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'The mind shall proceed to be alert and of keenly attentive nature as I breathe out', and thus: 'The mind shall proceed to be alert and of keenly attentive nature as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'The mind shall be free to comprehend truth with equanimity as I breathe out', and thus: 'The mind shall be free to comprehend truth with equanimity as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'I shall see and know that body and mind are impermanent and are bound to suffering as I breathe out', and thus: 'I shall see and know that body and mind are impermanent and are bound to suffering as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'I shall see and know that detachment from self-consciousness and cravings can free one from suffering as I breathe out', and thus: 'I shall see and know that detachment from self-consciousness and cravings can free one from suffering as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'I shall see and know that body and mind must ultimately cease to be as I breathe out', and thus: 'I shall see and know that body and mind must ultimately cease to be as I breathe in.'

"And further, he trains himself: 'I shall see and know that the way to end becoming is to disown body and mind as I breathe out,' and thus: 'I shall see and know that the way to end becoming is to disown body and mind as I breathe in.'

"O Bhikkhus! When one thus makes much practice of *ānāpāna-sati* meditation, the unsettled, wandering and rambling habit of body and mind cannot prevail

"O Bhikkhus! Even the Tathāgata, prior to the attainment of Enlightenment, while still striving for self-enlightenment, while still in the stage of a Bodhisatta, dwelt mindful mostly of *ānāpāna-sati* meditation. When thus occupied, the body gave no trouble, the eyes gave no trouble, and the mind was immune to defilements because it was devoid of attachments.

"Therefore, O Bhikkhus, should a Bhikkhu desire thus: 'My body shall give no trouble, my eyes shall give no trouble, and my mind shall be immune to defilements because it is free from detachments, then he should zealously develop and make much of *ānāpāna-sati* meditation.

"O Bhikkhus, if a Bhikkhu should desire thus: 'My homesick feelings shall all disappear entirely from my mind, then he should accordingly develop and make much of *ānāpāna-sati* meditation.

.....

"O Bhikkhus, if a Bhikkhu should desire thus: 'I shall pay no attention to all objects, both undetestable objects and detestable objects and shall dwell in serenity and with clear conscience', then he should accordingly develop and make much of *ānāpāna-sati* meditation."¹

¹ *Mahācaravagga, Samyutta-Nikāya*, 19-399-1324 — translated from the Thai version of "The Life of the Buddha from his own words" by A.P.

The recommendable method of practising mind control, however, is to meditate on "breathe" and switch on to the meditation on "serenity", and the procedure is as follows:

- (a) You have made up your mind as to where and when to meditate—whether once a week or twice a week or daily or nightly will depend upon your own choice; but always remember that you may meditate more often than the fixed time, but never less. The next thing to do is to find out the most comfortable posture. You can meditate in a standing, walking, sitting, or lying down posture; but it is usual and best to do it in a sitting posture, on the floor—tailor fashion and facing East, with the right leg over the left, the back of the right hand resting on the palm of the left, the sides of both hands (on the side of the little fingers) slightly pressed against the body about one inch above the navel, and "with the spine erect." If you feel uncomfortable in the legs, try a small cushion under the buttocks, so as to raise them slightly higher than the legs. Also, try another small flat cushion under the ankles to see if this will ease the "pins and needles" feeling in the legs. The point is that the best position for your comfort should be found by experiment, otherwise you will not be able to make much progress. Those who are inclined to put on too much weight may find it helpful to reduce and curb greediness before attempting this posture. Some female meditators, in the East, find it quite comfortable to kneel on an ample-sized cushion, sitting on their heels, their hands resting on their knees.

If, however, sitting on the floor is too uncomfortable to bear, you may sit on such a chair that your thighs lie flat on the seat and the soles of your feet flat on the ground, with the spine erect and both hands slightly pressed against the body about one inch above the navel as above. A stool is better, to prevent any inclination to rest against the back of the chair.

- (b) Close the eyes gently and "flex" the body to withdraw the tenseness of the muscles, by taking in long breaths through the nostrils and exhaling forcibly. Repeat this 3 or 4 times until the body is quite limp. Then lower both hands slowly and simultaneously until the wrists touch and rest on the upper thighs. Sit still, breathing without effort. This is to lose all sense of the body.
- (c) Now, do with the mind as you have done with the body. Let it go! At this stage, all kinds of ideas will surge up in the mind. Pay no attention—let them surge. Do not resist. Sit quietly as if you were watching a show. And after a time, without stirring, take possession and say mentally or, better, in a low firm voice, slow but audible, decisive yet reverent, "I am still I am peaceful and still I am at peace I am at peace." Repeat a few times. Then stop, and be quiet. Sit still, very peacefully and still, watching your own breath.

After a while, notice how every out-breathing and in-breathing make their contact with the inside of the nose-tip, and fix your attention on these

contacts which then become the "object" of mindfulness. If there is a tendency for the mind to wander, draw it back again by repeating the above affirmation.

- (d) After some practice, when the mind is somewhat under your control, you may again quietly take possession and utter mentally or in a low firm voice as before an affirmation or affirmations, such as: "The mind shall now proceed to undergo its own natural processes, so that I shall see and know the "way" to free it from suffering." Then just let the mind go. After that, wait quietly, avoid concentrating; but keep alert and calmly attentive to the contacts.
- (e) The object of meditation (the point of contact of breath) tends to fade with practice. This does not happen all at once; but it gradually fades away as one progresses in practice. Through regular training, one will gently slide into finer and finer breathing, of which one is yet aware, until at last one slips into a rather fantastic experience in which one is uncertain whether one is breathing or not. Then, all of a sudden an apparent suspension of breath will be experienced, and simultaneously one may find that one is bathed in light. This stage of mental absorption (*samādhi*) may be prolonged, with an attitude of awareness, as long as desired, and when one comes out of the meditation one should feel a sensation of peace and satisfaction within and would henceforth understand rightly the true meaning of "*anattā*" or "*non-self*" of one's own self. The advice at this

point is to strive on with the practice until one can get into this stage of mental absorption at will so as to prepare oneself for higher attainments.

The mind may be hard to control at first. If you met with any success in the first or second week, know that it was due to your own "*pārami*" which means progress made towards self-purification in former lives. It is beyond doubt a hard task to get settled down to this new habit; but, with perseverance, the spirit will get attuned to the quiet of the surroundings and the flesh will respond to self-discipline, and when both spirit and body become gradually merged and the ills of the flesh temporarily but completely vanish, there will be no need for urging on to practice, for the arising of the new realisation of "knowledge" will prompt one's own mind to dictate practice because of the great pleasure and mental peace derived from it. Diligent practice with relentless effort is bound to enable one to enter into the fourth *jhāna* and then to recede from the fourth to the third for the purpose of proving to oneself the truth that any idea which one wishes to impress upon the sub-consciousness can be transferred by the "will." It is this way that psychic and magical power is developed; but it should be remembered that psychic and magical power cannot really help one to attain liberation. Its development is not to be recommended, because the person who has acquired it is apt to be rash and incautious and interfere with the universal laws through displaying it when he should not; besides, whenever such power is known to others, its owner will not be left in peace.

Meditation had thus been regarded as the one principle which can be applied in life from a thousand different angles, even prior to the Buddha's time, especially by hermits and yogis, through the knowledge that "if only the mind is controlled until it becomes fixed, there is nothing which cannot be accomplished." And the Buddha, from his personal experience (*Mahāvaravagga-Samyutta Nikāya*), confirmed this conception and declared that the mind can be kept fixed by the four "*iddhi-pāda*" or the "four bases for obtaining magical powers," which are resident in the mind of man: concentration of will, concentration of energy, concentration of courage, and concentration of perseverance. That is to say, to succeed in any accomplishment, the qualifications needed are: first of all, the "will" (*chanda*) to reach whatever aim is set to the mind, to be followed by "relentless self-assertion" (*virīya*), because success grows in proportion to one's ability and one's own labour in its search, while the will to accomplish the aim must of necessity be backed by "courage" (*citta*), to face all ills of the flesh and all other obstacles, as also by that force of character which enables us to maintain "perseverance in mental discipline" (*vīmaṃsā*), by shutting out every idea, everything which is detrimental to success and holding down the mind to the one aim which one is intent on attaining until the end.

The Buddha also pointed out that each and everyone can, if he so wishes, develop these four mental faculties and acquire the ability to get into the fourth *jhāna* for the purpose of self-unfolding, and that continued practice of meditation with sincerity and diligence, after having

reached that stage of mind, will enable one to possess and enjoy at will, six supernatural powers or supernormal faculties beyond those of ordinary mankind, known as *abhiññā* viz.

1. Ten supernatural "magical powers" called *iddhi-vidhā*.
2. The "heavenly ear" (*dibbha-sota*), which will enable one to hear both kinds of sound—the heavenly and earthly, or the distant and the near.
3. The "inner mind", with which one may obtain "insight into the hearts of other beings" (*parassa-ceto-pariya-ñāna*). Telepathy is but its offspring.
4. The "power to recall the experiences of previous existences" (*pubbe-nivās-ānussati-ñāna*).
5. The "heavenly eye" or "inner eye" (*dibba-cakkhu*), which will enable one to see what happens after death, to distinguish between the base and the noble, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the unfortunate, and to perceive how beings are reborn according to their deeds (*kamma*).
6. The power to know for oneself, in this very life, the stainless deliverance of mind—the deliverance through wisdom; but this particular sixth *abhiññā*, which is ultramundane (*lokuttara*), is different from the other five supernatural powers, which are mundane (*lokiya*) conditions of the mind and can be acquired even by a so-called "worldling" (*puthujjana*), for it can only be acquired through the "cessation of passion" (*āsavakkhaya*) and is therefore exclusively the characteristic of the Arahāt or Holy One.

The recent extension of wireless transmission and television should make one realise that we are indeed dwelling in the midst of embodiments of light and sound which we cannot see and hear, for definite waves are transmitted through the air for very long distances, of which we should know nothing if it were not for the apparatus of wireless receivers and television sets. When the necessary apparatus is put together, then we see the images and hear the sounds and thus can recognize personal qualities in the human body and human voice transmitted miles away in magic-like style. We can therefore readily comprehend that there may be waves of particular lengths which cannot be tapped by the ordinary eyes and ears or even by the most up-to-date of all receiving sets invented by man; but the Buddha found out and revealed to all that there is a special receiving apparatus hidden in every human mind that can see and hear them, and he also exposed the various methods to be used through meditation for attuning it properly.

Unknown to us, the body is an instrument that receives and conducts, through the actions of our own lives, the universal wisdom and power of the universe. To meditate, or to enter into the silence of one's own being, or to enter into a state of mental absorption or *samādhi*, by abstracting oneself from conscious contact with the world around one, is but to attune the human instrument in such a way that the universal wisdom and force of life are switched on to it. He who is in this state of mental absorption is not asleep and yet he does not hear when others speak to him. He is not in a frenzy nor in a trance.

He is not hypnotized and yet he is oblivious to his senses, waiting for the solution to his problem. He is in a state very similar to that of the ordinary concentrated mind when we are very deeply interested in and silently watch a television show or listen to a radio speech, except that the subject is in a state of abstraction, with his human eyes and ears closed, watching and listening to the universal wisdom with his "inner eye and ear."

Meditation is the supply source of universal wisdom and power, and it is possible for man to tap the all-pervading wisdom and energies of the universe and make use of them for his benefit and comfort. Anyone can therefore retire into the silence with his own being and silently will that he is opening himself to the floodgates of eternal force and that he is being suffused with power and vitality; or he can take into the silence any problem he has and say mentally or audibly to himself in a decisive, yet reverent tone, "I bring this problem for solution. I believe I shall receive the right answer to it," and follow it up with the questionnaire. Then let him "wait and listen" quietly; but keep alert, calmly desiring the result he seeks. Sometimes it will come in a flash, as though someone were at your elbow and replied to your question as soon as you formulated it; at other times there will be no instantaneous result, because men vary, but an hour later or in the next few days or in a couple of weeks or months, while you are in the silence for the same purpose, you will hear a voice speaking to you quite unexpectedly and giving you a suggestion or the answer you want. Once you can cultivate the habit of retiring within yourself when in

perplexity or when "losing heart" in life, you have a friend to go to for advice which will prove of inestimable worth. For that "voice of the silence" will unfailingly manifest itself, if you are not too self-satisfied or too proud to take notice and listen. But you should remember that the mind is not to be treated in an arbitrary fashion. Never say to the mind: "You will have to do this because I say so," and give no reason. You may compel obedience, but it is the wrong attitude to take and it will react unfavourably on the mind. Whatever is forced is never natural and, when it is not natural, it is done at the expense of some other part of the organism. It is "going against the grain" or "swimming against the current", instead of with it.

"Meditate, O Bhikkhu! Do not be heedless. For the Bhikkhu who has retired to a quiet abode, who has calmed his mind, who clearly perceives the doctrine, there is a joy transcending that of men"¹

The five mental qualities indispensable to self-unfoldment (indriya)

In view of the fact that practice of meditation, when unbacked by morality, is always accompanied by the risk that the practitioner may be tempted to assume "divine right" and usurp authority, because of the magical and supernatural powers gained, the Buddha refrained from elaborating on the methods of acquiring these magical powers, lest they should be misused and become hindrances on the road to the progress of mankind. He thus laid

¹ *Dhammapada*, XXV, 371, 373.

emphasis on the fact that, for the purpose of solving for oneself all the riddles of life, it is quicker and easier to develop the "inner eye" "to see and to know" at will the trends of all the potential *kamma* of the individuals as well as of the groups which are still accumulated in the universal storehouse.

"There is nothing strange in this, *Ānanda*," says the Buddha, being wearied of answering the questions of *Ānanda* as to what had happened to this or that devout man who had died, "that a human being should die; but that as each one does so you should come to me and inquire about them in this manner, that is wearisome to me. I will, therefore teach you a way of truth, called the mirror of truth, which, if a disciple of the noble ones possess, he may, if he should so desire, 'himself predict of himself'."¹

This mode of meditation is known as *samatha-kammatthāna*, and for the purpose of distinguishing it from the other kind of meditation taught by the Buddha in which there is no incantation (*bhāvanā*) to accompany it, this type of meditation is referred to by adepts as "incantatory meditation." If diligently and sincerely practised, it will not only enable one to solve the riddles of life, such as if Heaven is really the peaceful home of man and whether this world wherein we live or in other words, human life, is truly the direct road to *Nibbāna*; but it will also empower one to make use of the "inner eye" thus acquired to gain intuitive information with which to achieve whatever purpose one has in view, provided that that purpose does not clash with the universal laws.

1 "Sacred Books of the Buddhists", Vol. III, p. 99.

All this, no doubt, seems beyond belief; but the Buddha made it plain to all his disciples that everyone can acquire this "inner eye" for himself, if he will only take pains to develop within himself the five mental qualities which are in fact common to all, viz.

1. Incentive (*saddhā*)
2. Self-evolving energy (*virīya*)
3. Mental awareness (*sati*)
4. Mental absorption (*saṃādhi*)
5. Intuitive insight (*paññā*)

that is to say, one must, first of all, develop, not blind faith, but an *incentive* or intense desire to achieve the aim, by keeping privacy and conspiring with oneself to succeed through the development of one's own interest in the object in view. For an interest must be got up in anything that is taken up, whatever it be. Without interest, there will be no incentive, the mental powers will not focus themselves on the matter in hand and no headway will be made at all. Once interest can be aroused and is backed by reason, incentive will arise. After incentive arises in the mind, it will naturally stir up the *evolutionary energy* latent within, that is needed to achieve the aim until *mental awareness* is awakened and directs the mind to focus or concentrate on the object one wishes to attain until, in turn, the state of *mental absorption* is reached; finally *intuitive insight* will undergo its own natural processes of contacting the universal wisdom and present the required object or solution in the form of visions for consciousness to perceive. Now, when this latter intuitive faculty has once been successfully aroused into activity, it should be

kept in constant use by means of repetition, until all feelings of uneasiness around the eyes vanish. With diligent practice, the "inner eye" will gradually become part and parcel of oneself, and one may make use of it at will, at any time, at any place and for any blameless purpose.

Rebirth is indeed a process that cannot be easily explained. It is one of those things, very similar to toothache although very much more complicated, which one has to experience in order to "know." It cannot be perfectly grasped by the intellect, even that belonging to the brainiest of us with yards of university degrees and other qualifications after his name; yet each and everyone of us can with relentless effort find out for himself the truth concerning his own past lives; and the method which is part of the greatest Teaching accessible to man, as exposed by the Buddha, is as follows:

The first step is to develop the incentive to achieve the aim. Then enter into the silence with a strong desire to see the vision of your own physical self. When both body and mind are in a state of perfect peace, make a slight effort and will that you shall see the likeness of your own self with closed eyes. Sit calmly and still, with lids gently closed and eyes slightly raised, as if you were looking upward to your forehead. Be very still, so still that you are only aware of the contacts between your own breath and the inside of your nose-tip. Then gently switch both your attention and your gaze on to that region, mid-way between the eye-brows, and will that that vision of your own physical self shall appear before your eyes.

Wait and watch, perfectly still. Do not strain. At this stage, it would appear as if the darkness before you is continually changing colours—from black to green, from green to pale light blue, etc. Pay no attention. Calmly desire the result you seek. The darkness before you will turn into light, and you will, of a sudden, see just a little removed from the front of your eyes a picture of your own self clothed in the same way as you are. Hold the picture, and when it becomes clear and distinct, mentally wish to see the pictures of your own self retrospectively, say every three years. In this way you may carry your wish back into your former lives, if desired; but do not forget to express gratitude to the Buddha after you have unfolded the truth to yourself. When you come out of meditation, you should feel a sense of wonder mingled with that of satisfaction within; but always remember that any attempt to convince others of what has unfolded itself to you will only make them believe that you had a touch of malaria and passed unknowingly into a state of coma.

Keeping thoughts out of the mind which one would rather not meet or entertain is one of the supreme difficulties; however like all difficulties, it can be met and overcome, no matter how unpromising the initial efforts, because it must be remembered that no effort is entirely wasted. An effort is a cause and therefore it must have an effect. Should you meet with such difficulty after trying for some time and you are indeed sincere in your quest after truth, you are advised to summon up your courage and try again. Do not be afraid, and this time, when you are still and have fixed your gaze on that region

between the eyebrows and willed that that vision of your own self shall appear before you, reverently say to yourself mentally the following incantation and repeat it again and again:

“Pub-di-ah . . . Pub-di-ah . . . Pub-di-ah”
the vowel *u* in *Pub* is to be pronounced like *oo* in *poop*; the *i* in *di* like that sound of *i* in the word *dib* or *dip*; and the sound *a* in *ah* is like that in the word *agree*. Do not trouble your mind about the meaning of those words, at this stage. To know their meaning now would not be helpful. What you are after is the result you seek, and the best thing to do is to pronounce mentally those three words each time you take in your breath, and mentally to utter them again each time you exhale. As soon as the darkness before you has been pierced, say “*ehi*” (and mention your own name). The *e* is pronounced like *a* and *hi* like the word *hit* without the *t*. Then calmly watch and await the result. The vision of your own physical self will appear before you and you may then proceed as already explained to make the wish that the pictures of your former lives shall be unfolded to you.¹

If, however, you should desire to see the difference between heaven and hell, substitute the above incantation with the following:

To make visions of heaven appear before you, say:

“*Arahang sukkkati ehi,*”

and to see what hell is like, mentally say:

“*Arahang dukkhati ehi.*”

¹ Cf. *Bodhirajakumara Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya*.

Always remember to express gratitude to the Buddha for what has unfolded itself to you before you come out of each meditation by mentally repeating three times "*Arahant sammā*."

"He who knows his former abodes, he who sees heaven and hell, he who has put an end to births, he who has perfected himself along the Path of Light, he who has done all there is to be done—him I called a Brahmana (an Arahant)¹

The five mental powers that make self-unfoldment possible (bala)

We have seen that man is made up of *khandha* or five aggregates of existence: form, feeling, cognition, impression and consciousness. The first of these, form, constitutes the material body containing the sense-organs, and the remaining four aggregates represent the mind. The connection between the sense organs of the body and the mind, according to present-day understanding, is through a very fine and very intricate network of nerves, and is so wisely and minutely arranged and so sensitive that the slightest touch, with the point of a needle on the skin anywhere, is instantaneously reported to the brain, wherein the mind seems to be working. When anything goes wrong in the body, it is known at this particular receiving station or mind, where we are warned of danger whether within or without, through processes as follows:

When the sense organs come into contact with external objects, the nerves immediately come into action and report the contact to the receiving station. "Feeling",

¹ *Dhammapada*, XXVI, 423.

which constitutes part of the mind, then translates it into pain combined with the sensation of pleasantness, or of unpleasantness, or of indifference. After analysing and comparing this sensation with previous experience, "cognition" translates it again into terms of emotion of like or dislike and then passes the idea on for sanction. "Consciousness" then perceives the idea, reasons it out from cause to effect, passes judgment, and finally sends it along to be printed and stored up, as sensorial impression, or as memory, or as experience, in that part of the mind called "impression," which has an unlimited capacity to receive and store ideas.

From this, it is clear that the second, third, and fifth *khandha*, feeling, cognition and consciousness, collectively may be compared to that phase of man's consciousness known as the conscious mind, whilst the fourth *khandha*, or impression, may be likened to that other phase usually called the subconscious mind, whose duty, after having received the order from consciousness, is, first of all, either to reject or retain the idea in accordance with instructions and then, if retained, to disperse it into the universal storehouse or space, through every nook and corner of the whole structure of the material body in the form of thoughts, words and deeds. Thus, all ideas or contacts that enter through the senses are first cognized and then perceived by the conscious mind, after which they sink into that department of the mind which we called subconsciousness and, as they dissipate themselves out into space, they will affect both body and mind, beneficially or adversely, in accordance with their nature.

For aiding to understand the human mind, a review of the different characteristics of the two distinct phases of consciousness will not be out of place.

The conscious mind (*vedanā, saññā and viññāna*), as every one will admit, is very active, and it is so because it is always kept busy by contacts between the six sense organs and the surrounding world. It is inclined to be restless as well as mischievous and usually abhors quiet, and yet clamours for peace. When it gets tired, it will rest, i. e. when man goes to sleep. When not resting, it will keep on analysing, comparing and reasoning from cause to effect, and always takes great delight in making decisions and giving orders. And in spite of the fact that, when awake, it is the man at the wheel, as well as the sentinel guard at the entrance to the subconscious mind, and should therefore do its own thinking, yet it continues to allow the senses to influence most of its decisions.

The subconscious mind or *sankhāra*, on the other hand, has no reasoning faculty and can, therefore, neither judge nor decide. It has broadly two duties to perform: one is to build and repair the material body and the other is to take orders from the conscious mind—to do whatever the conscious mind directs it to do. It has all the latent intelligence and energies, as well as the unlimited supplies of wisdom and power of the universe at its disposal, because it is part and parcel of the universal mind. It keeps the physical body functioning—controls breathing, the circulation of the blood, and all the involuntary muscles. It is the most efficient healer and knows how to repair injuries to any part and how to cure ailments, and

it will continue to heal and to cure to perfection, provided the conscious mind does not interfere and give conflicting orders; for instance, it will heal a cut in no time and without the use of astringent, if the injured person will refrain from distracting its attention to the wound by thinking otherwise.

It is readily seen that when the subconscious mind is allowed to do its recuperating work without interference, as when the conscious mind relaxes during sleep, it can, in two to three hours, make one feel refreshed; but during waking hours it is never left alone and has to attend to two duties concurrently, for whatever the conscious mind accepts and decides upon as true, the subconscious mind will automatically accept as true without judgment and keep on at the new job until it is done. Its latent power is tremendous, which can easily be inferred from the fact that it has an enormous amount of energy to enable the heart to pump and purify the blood within the body every day of 24 hours for 365 days in the year, and for the whole span of the human life, without a rest or a holiday. It also has, besides its own latent energies, the ability to draw for its own use from the boundless universal power of nature, with which it is always in contact through the breath. Thus, whatever the conscious mind decides, the subconscious mind will at once attempt to carry the decision out. It will not question the decision. Its duty is to carry out our thoughts to their logical conclusions—a decision to lift up a book is an instruction to the subconscious mind to send a message along the nerves to the muscles of the fingers to direct the operation of lifting the book.

The subconscious mind is also capable of supplying us with wonderful and fascinating ideas of what we can do, from the memories and experiences accumulated from countless previous births which it never forgets and which it can always recall through a quality that usually allows to lie undeveloped within, *intuitive insight* which, in truth, is man's best friend without his knowing it. It is the light of nature that enables man to discover the reality of things, unaided by so-called revelation. All man's achievements—all modern scientific discoveries and inventions must all exist as mental designs procreated by this intuitive faculty before they can materialise, otherwise the inventors would not know how to go about their work—how to put them into drawings and blue-prints to guide construction and operation, if they did not first have them as plans, pictures and impressions in their minds. A horse or an elephant is actually much stronger than its rider or mahout; but it cannot become wiser and can never rise to the position of master. This is just because the horse or the elephant possesses no power of contacting the universal mind for knowledge; but *man has*. He imagines a ship, and he builds it—he makes iron float. He imagines a railway train, and he constructs it. He imagines a railroad, and he lays it; a sky-scraper building more than eighty stories high, and he erects it, etc. And it is this very special human faculty—intuitive insight or “light within” that starts and then leads imagination on the right track and thus makes everything possible, because man can use it to direct all of nature's laws to his own advantage.

The Buddha taught that man has within him five mental qualities with which he can work wonders: the incentive to stir up the evolutionary energy necessary to arouse mental awareness into action, in order to keep the mind in a state of mental absorption until intuitive insight works wonders for him. That is to say, because man is endowed with these five special faculties, whenever he seeks earnestly for a thing, he will not be denied it. Nature must give it him. But his demand must be such as to shake the man to the roots of his being. There must be no half-heartedness about his wants. There must be actual need, not a half-formed wish to gratify idle curiosity. He must be afire with passion for the possession of that which he desires. What that is is immaterial. The Buddha, therefore, also emphasized that to succeed in "turning the wheel" of these particular five mental qualities, man also needs five kinds of mental powers to set it rolling. And those five mental powers required to direct the operation are also resident in man.

One must, first of all, possess a *clear conviction* (*saddhā-bala*) that it is possible to achieve whatever one has set one's mind upon, as long as it appeals to the reason as a possibility. Without clear conviction to dispel doubt (*assaddhiya*), the incentive to achieve the aim cannot arise in full. After the conviction has been firmly established in the mind, *right assertion* (*virīya-bala*) is required in the form of affirmation or incantation (*bhāvanā*) to stir up evolutionary energy and drive away that drowsy reluctance (*kosajja*), which often is but a form of fear, until the conviction passes out of the mental into feeling and is

then transformed and concentrated into *self-confidence* (*sati-bala*). At this stage, mental awareness will be aroused and one will be free from rashness (*butthasacca*), for one will not only be conscious of one's own feeling that success is a possibility, but should also be aware that the sensations within one's own being are shaken and alive with the truth that it is a certainty. Thus, *self-determination* (*samādhi-bala*) will be awakened, restlessness (*vikkepa*) will disappear, and at the same time concentration of mind will be promoted and intensified until mental absorption is brought about. Finally, *discerning effort* (*paññā-bala*) is needed to dispel delusion (*moha*), whereby conviction will undergo its own natural processes and pass into deep sheer intuition, which will silently contact the universal wisdom and supply us with solutions, hints or schemes in the form of visions, depending upon our own ability to keep the mind fixed as well as upon the ability to formulate precisely the problem to be presented to it.

We should therefore befriend our subconscious mind as though it were an individual, and it will become our guide, adviser and friend all in one once we have learned how to contact it. The important thing to note is that *the faintest suspicion in the mind that one cannot do what one wants to do immediately raises barriers*. For the subconscious mind cannot reason; it will simply take orders and at once commence to carry them out. It has the power to carry out every order to its logical conclusion and will keep on at it until it is done, provided that there is no conflict in the mind between reason and intuitive insight. This is so, because reason belongs to the conscious mind (feeling,

cognition and consciousness) which decides and gives orders, whilst intuitive insight belongs to the subconscious mind (impression) which must obey and will immediately wipe out "all" its good work as soon as it receives a negative instruction—even if it were, at the time, about to put the finishing touch to that good work—as soon as one allows such thoughts to crop up: "I can't", "I don't think I can wait any longer", "It is too difficult", "It's impossible."

All achievements are thus possible because of man's intuitive insight—the mother of all creations; but we must direct it to our own wish, and it can be done by the will. Only half a century ago, flying was believed to be a myth; but now even children know that men can fly by means of aeroplanes. Television was a dream before; but now medical students can watch surgeons performing operations in another room, etc. All such things which had not been done before and which had been condemned as "castles in the air" are but the products of intuitive insight.

Not only applied science or technique but also pure science are the fruits of intuitive insight. Had this mental faculty within the minds of great modern scientists not been awakened, there would have been no flash of illumination and they would not have been able to make those discoveries which have had the most effect on people's lives. Copernicus (1473-1543) discovered that the earth was not flat and that it is not the centre of heavens. Galileo (1564-1642) found out that the earth does not remain stationary but moves. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

discovered many facts about the material universe and laid down many laws regulating its working. Professor Albert Einstein (1879-1955) made certain modification in Newton's law and his theory of relativity has indeed changed our notion of the universe in many ways. Harvey (1578-1657) found out that the circulation of the blood within our bodies is dependent upon the beating of the heart and consequently established our medical knowledge on scientific principles. And Charles Darwin (1809-1882) has shown that all living things in the world to-day, including human beings, evolve and have probably developed from one or two early and very simple kinds of creatures.

Scientific discoveries and inventions that have changed man's lives and made them happier, because they are provided with more comfort and convenience as well as means of lessening pain caused by disease, are all the products of intuitive insight. And if intuitive insight can devise machines and gadgets that reveal to these scientists depths and mysteries beyond the scope of the normal senses, it surely can help us to build health conditions, success instead of failure, courage instead of fear, wealth instead of poverty and, above all, it can be of immense help to all of us towards the realisation of the common purpose of life and peaceful living so that men shall be placed on the road which will lead to the fulfilment of the common supreme duty; but the intuitive insight must be trained and kept under control, by means of "right meditation."

Knowing this, it now rests with the individual to do as he likes with his possessions. He can allow them to lie fallow and continue to live the life he has hitherto lived, or he may commence at once to make use of them. Men are usually afraid to part with their consciousness of the body, for fear of falling through the realm of emptiness in which there is nothing to which they can cling. But one has got to lose oneself in something which is greater than oneself in order to see *dhamma*, and the mind must merge with universal mind before truth will reveal itself.

“The man who, through personal experience, is unswayable, who understands the uncreated (*Nibbāna*), who has severed the chain (of renewed existence), who is indifferent to good and evil, who has uprooted desires—he, indeed, is the noblest of men.”¹

The seven elements of enlightenment (*bodhi-anga*)

Mind is, at all times, in a state of flux and commotion, because it is constantly subjected to innumerable kinds of natural forces from countless sources. It is not only the centrifugal and centripetal forces, etc., which are being endlessly produced by the motions of the earth around the sun and around its own axis, that affect the mind; the gravitational pull of the earth, the heat and rays emitted by the sun, the actions and reactions of matter and of the *kamma* of the groups' and one's own actions in life, etc., all join in causing constant changes all around us. Weather changes and the changes in fortune and in health conditions of nations, of groups, of societies and of

¹ *Dhammapada*, VII. 97.

individuals are the results of this inter-play of forces. The mind of men is thus always in a whirl. And man, in his endeavour to free his mind from these disturbances, turns to his sense-organs and consciousness for counsel, instead of turning as he should to the universal wisdom through his "mental awareness", with the consequence that he becomes a prey to the fire of the three passions, lust, anger, and delusion, which bind him to the Wheel of Rebirth. He can no longer remember his supreme duty and has truly forgotten how to detach his "mental awareness" from the *khandha*, so as to let the latter breathe their last breaths when time comes and to die their own natural deaths without his feeling the apparent pain.

The Buddha, therefore, emphasized that, after acquiring the "inner eye", with or without the help and advice of "one who knows", especially after having regained, through this special faculty, a clear conviction that there is a common purpose of life, one should commence, without delay, to practise right meditation (*vipassanā-kammatthāna*). The purpose of this is to expel, step by step, from the mind lust, anger and delusion, so that one's thoughts, words, and deeds will gradually become rid of such motives as produce those *kamma* that need a material body in which to manifest themselves, and thus become prepared for the ultimate attainment of enlightenment and *Nibbāna*.

One should, therefore, daily practise in the quiet of the night the meditation on serenity or equanimity—to keep in training the seven elements of enlightenment which reside in the mind of every man, so as to enable one

to enter into the state of mental awareness whenever desired and for a long period at a time. This means that, when entering into the silence of one's own being, one should endeavour to keep *mental awareness (sati)* always on the alert, through being aware of the fact that one is actually in the course of performing one's own supreme duty and that the "way" or truth is sure to gradually unfold itself. This will, of its own accord, arouse *discrimination (dhamma-vicaya)* into activity—the critical faculty that silently points out which ideas and which visionary manifestations that continue to arise in the mind will constitute hindrances towards the accomplishment of the supreme duty, and which will promote the realisation of the common purpose of life. It will, at the same time, awaken *evolutionary energy (viriya)* to dispel all undesirable manifestations and to direct the attention to those that lead to enlightenment only, until the mind attains to the state of *rapture (piti)*. At this stage, the mind is inclined to become overwhelmed with rapture or happiness and to cease from its evolutionary functioning, and drowsiness will set in. This reluctance to take leave of rapture must be overcome by maintaining mental awareness in an eager and wakeful state, ever ready enthusiastically to incite the mind to proceed to undergo further natural processes of its own until the sensation of rapture vanishes. When this occurs the mind will momentarily pass into the state of *tranquillity (passadhi)*, wherein the body is lifted up with ecstasy, caused by the realisation of oneness of body and mind; and then, all of a sudden, the mind will enter into the condition of *mental absorption (samādhi)*, and finally

into the state of *equanimity* (*upekkhā*), wherein there is present in the mind only mental awareness, calmness and peace.

Anyone who can part his mental awareness from his body for a long period at a time is blessed with a means to evade such agonising pain and sufferings as he may have to face in this life from severe sickness and at death, and which are but manifestations of his own evil deeds committed in previous existences, as well as those committed in early life. Thus, success in this direction being once attained, the lucky one should spare no effort to continue its practice until the qualities won become a permanent possession for the whole term of life. To such a mindful and fearless one, death will never tap on his shoulder without giving ample previous warning, so that he shall be fully prepared to face the appointed hour.

Continued practice of the seven elements of enlightenment is thus but to keep always in training, so that the mind will be able to enter into right meditation (*vipassanā-kammatthāna*), whenever it is called upon to do so, for the purpose of attaining enlightenment and *Nibbāna* and hence self-deliverance from the chain of successive births. The rewards for one's labour in reverent adherence to right meditation are graded into four stages of holiness, all of which can be attained in this life :

When a man has attained to the first stage, he becomes known as a "*sotāpanna*" or "stream-enterer", meaning that he has "entered upon the stream" that flows to *Nibbāna*.

"Better than universal rule over earth, better than going to heaven, better even than lordship over all worlds is the fruit of this first stage."¹

He indeed who has attained to it can rest assured that he is henceforth keeping rythm with the universe, meaning that he has, without question, escaped from the four *apāya* (*animal* life, *peta* life, *asura* life and *hell* life), because he can no longer commit the five grave offences (patricide, matricide, killing an Arahāt, wounding a Buddha, creating schisms), and at the most he is to be born again in the human state only seven more times before attaining to *Nibbāna*.

"And verily those are filled with unshaken faith towards me, all those who have entered the stream."²

He who succeeds in reaching the next higher stage of self-deliverance will become a "*sakadāgāmi*" or "once-returned," meaning that he will have to live only one more life as a human being after the present one.

But should he manage to gain the third stage, he will then become an "*anāgāmi*" or "never-returned" to this earth. He is free from delusion, he is enlightened and will, after his death, become a heavenly being up in the highest plane of Brahma, from where he will attain to *Nibbāna* as soon as the residual *kamma* has spent itself.

The fourth stage is the highest stage of holiness, and can only be reached by an Arahāt who has vanquished

¹ *Dhammapada*, XIII, 178.

² *Anguttara-Nikāya*, X, 63 - Nyanatiloka, "The word of the Buddha."

all human passion. That quality in man which would have caused renewed existence is no longer with him—he is like a lamp in which the remnant oil is burning itself out. There is no more refuelling and the light will flicker out as soon as the oil is exhausted.

“He who has acquired complete mastery over the senses, like steeds well tamed by a charioteer; who has dispelled doubt and is free from all fetters—such self-subdued one even Devas hold in esteem. Like the earth such steadfast one resents not. He is firm like the chief post of Sakka’s palace gate, is reposed like a pool unsallied by mud. To him life’s wanderings are no more. Truly calm and translucent is his mind, truly calm is his speech, truly calm is his deed. He has penetrated the Teaching and is liberated, perfectly peaceful, imperturbable and serene.”¹

He is still alive, a man still subject to physical discomfort, calmly awaiting the last residuum of unexhausted *kamma* to spend itself; but he is now free from all errors—he sees and values all things at their true value, for evil desires of all kinds have been rooted up from his mind. He has seen his former lives and can now see the past of others. He can read other people’s minds and can see how all earthly and heavenly beings are subjected to the repetition of birth and death in accordance with their *kamma*. He is fully conscious that he will enter *Nibbāna* and never be born again. An electric fan will continue to whirl for a time after the switch is off, and so the living body of the Arahāt still keeps in motion though its motive power is gone—simply waiting before it dies its natural

¹ *Dhammapada*, VII, 94-96.

last death, that the last particle of *kamma* truly spends itself; and without feeling the pain or agony.

The Buddha, on one occasion, said :

“O Bhikkhus ! The Tathāgata has already uprooted from this body that craving (*tanhā*) which leads to renewed existence, yet this body of the Tathāgata still stands. So long as his body shall last, so long gods and men shall see him. After the breaking-up of the body, his life being ended, gods and men shall not see him.”¹

The “Noble Eightfold Path” is “The” Way of Life

We have seen that the universe and all there is in it cannot remain still for an instant. Everything is in motion, because all is *anicca* (impermanent), *dukkha* (a prey to suffering) and *anattā* (devoid of abiding principle). Everything is subject to the law of *paticca-samuppāda* and must undergo “change”. Hence life is only a stage in the universal process, and man is only a body-dweller. The only thing he has and uses is his thought, for the natural process of living is first to think, then to feel and finally to act. Thinking, feeling and acting, that comprises all that man does. Thought is thus the criterion of man’s deed. It is governed by the law of *kamma*. Right thought is conducive to peace of mind and to world-peace, whilst wrong thought affects life adversely, giving birth to world disturbance and personal chaos !

The unrest and turmoil we see everywhere around us are, in the light of the Teaching, the direct consequence of mankind’s failure to observe the moral laws which

¹ *Brahmajālasutta*.

govern the activities of his mind. To prevent such adverse conditions and live together in peace, it is necessary to resolve to awaken the latent abilities within us into action and in particular to set thought and intuition to work — to pursue "right living" and to live rightly and peacefully. But it is well to remember that even though the resolution be right and truly great effort is put forward in applying that right resolution, the result can never be right unless there be right understanding of what one is doing. If the understanding be wrong, the resolution and all that follows it must unavoidably be correspondingly wrong. For to achieve anything in life, one must, first of all, possess a sound understanding of what one sets the mind to achieve. Then, before it can be done, the next thing is to resolve rightly to do it.

Gotama, the Buddha, had practised right resolution, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindedness as well as meditation for many years; but it was not until after he had, through right understanding, made a fresh resolution again to partake of sufficient food to regain health and pledged himself to the effect that, even if death overtook him on the way, he would remain seated under the Bodhi tree until he should succeed in securing the solution to his problem, that he met with success, discovered right meditation and became the Fully Enlightened One.

Right understanding is therefore the first stepping stone to all human success and achievements and, to live together peacefully in this world, the first and foremost step is to acquire right understanding of life, its meaning and purpose and the laws that govern it.

While meditating under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha perceived with direct insight the true nature of life, the causes of its being subjected to repeated arising and passing away, as well as the truth that it ultimately ends in *Nibbāna*. This means that there is a common purpose in life for all to fulfil, and he who leaves his supreme life-duty in abeyance shall have to endure being born again and again, to suffer and enjoy the results of his own (unpurged) past thoughts and actions, until he learns that sensory experiences, however pleasant, are but comparative pain, and until indescribable sorrow should force him to tear himself loose from all attachments in order to escape from the miseries of personal existence.

For the welfare of gods and men, the Buddha made his personal experience known to all. He did not, however, only ask us to cognize and accept the truth of world-pain, as this would merely aggravate that seething unrest and insecurity already existing within the mind. He also proclaimed to all who will listen, the Noble Eightfold Path as the way of life to put an end to ignorance and craving and pass beyond the sorrow of repeated births, decay and deaths.

The characteristic of the Path is that we must, first of all, possess *right understanding* that there is no permanent or immortal soul-principle in man, for he is only the main stage in the universal process, the only one where a being has within his gross embodiment the ability to exercise freedom of choice—to remain under the dominion of the six illusory senses and continue to take orders from the three monsters, greed, anger and delusion,

and thus maintain the life-process from one birth to another, or to begin to do his utmost to subdue ignorance and craving and transcend those so-called pleasurable and fleeting sensory experiences that are but mixtures of pain.

Through contact with the outside world, we are constantly confronted with the choice between good deeds (*kusalā kamma*) and bad ones (*akusalā kamma*); the moral effects of what is thought, said and done now will not only influence our peace of mind in the present life, but also determine the well-being of our future life, because thought precedes physical action and every thought based on craving for existence produces that kind of *kamma* that binds one to *samsāra* and hence to endless suffering. However, this does not mean that there is no way of liberating ourselves from those entanglements.

Although the mind is bound on every side by conditions and is, in the ordinary sense, only free to interpret knowledge in terms of mundane or *lokiya* relationships, it can be liberated from its conventions by raising the awareness above the three-dimensional plane of thought into the supramundane or *lokuttara* plane for the purpose of viewing all phenomena from an entirely different angle of perception and of realizing for oneself what real freedom from selfhood is. The Buddha had shown that this can be done by taking up and adhering to a proper method of meditation. But, to succeed, one must put a stop to further accumulation within the mind of defilements or *āsava* through attachment and clinging to sense-objects by making the *right resolution* to stick to "*right living*", which will bring forth peace to the world

and in this very life the mental peace that will finally lead to emancipation from suffering.

But to uphold that right resolution, observance of moral duties is indispensable viz. not to destroy the life of any sentient being, not to take that which does not rightly belong to one, not to commit adultery, not to indulge in evil utterance, and to abstain from intoxicants, etc., by cultivating *right speech*, *right action*, and *right livelihood*, especially right speech, which is of paramount importance, for right speech means right conduct and right conduct leads to right livelihood. This is so because the words we utter, the sounds that we make, are, without our being aware of it, that which causes us to become what we are.

Right speech is the first course in self-discipline. What one says has the knack of becoming real in life. Every word that flows out from the mouth is a cause. We fail to take note of it simply because its effect takes time to become apparent. Most of us waste and abuse most of our life energies by not knowing how to use sound—not knowing how to talk—not knowing when to talk and when to keep silent. Most people defy the law of *kamma* by the very use of the spoken words. Thus, great care must be taken of one's speech—actually of what one says, for what one says is a reflection of one's own thought. By saying something, one endorses it—and one should endorse only life truths, for then one will be speaking in consonance with the law of evolution, which will lead one on to right conduct. Because the "word" is the switch, so to speak, that starts the current of life running through our bodies; and upon the manner in which the switch is

operated the result depends. We should therefore refrain from thinking and speaking of failure now that we have learnt that whatever the conscious mind (*vedanā, saññā* and *viññāna*) decides, the subconscious mind (*sankhāra*) will at once, unquestioningly, begin to carry out the mental and spoken decision to its logical conclusions, unless a subsequent instruction to the contrary is given. For this reason, it is advisable to keep silent until and unless we have something to say, and life will unfold within us in accordance with the law of *paticcasamuppāda*.

To maintain that right resolution to pursue right living, however, the endeavour to cultivate right speech, right action and right livelihood needs the backing of right effort. For without *right effort*—the effort to avoid and the effort to overcome evil desires as well as the effort to develop and the effort to maintain right desires—all that we do and say, think and feel, will not be consciously kept under control, and we will not be trying our best to keep rhythm with our resolution.

We are all here to learn from the experience of life; innumerable lives have we already been through and yet we are still far from learning the true lessons. We go against the stream of life every time we defy the universal laws of *paticcasamuppāda* and *kamma*, and every repetition of the deed makes the confusion of the mind more confounded. Moral aim is no doubt helpful and so is moral conviction; but without self-control, self-training, and right assertion to acquire the "inner eye" through the practice of *samatha* meditation so as to bring about a state of realisation beyond normal consciousness, as well as to

prepare oneself for future development of insight by correlating the faculty gained with the "seven elements of enlightenment", there can be no proper concentration of one's accumulated energy for the right purpose. Right effort must therefore be put forth. By so doing, the subject becomes wiser day by day, because the how and why of his deeds and aims become clearer and clearer. He naturally makes his the habit of *right mindedness* and always associates himself in his thought with his resolution. For he is convinced of the truth that the five moral precepts, the *pañca sīla* do not apply to the visible actions of the body only, but also to the invisible functioning of the mind. Spiritually, homicidal intention is murder; a covetous thought, particularly that prompted by envy, means an attempted theft; a mental device to evade truth is just as harmful to the thinker as any spoken word; excess in anything is characteristic of a drunkard; and to look at a woman with a thought of lust after her is like having already committed adultery with her in one's heart, etc. Man will refrain from all such commitments, when peace is truly his aim; and in time there will be no need for consideration of the course of his life, any more than a man in perfect health need worry about medicine or injections. For when good habits become parts of our consciousness, it becomes impossible for us to give way to bad habits, because consciousness can only express that which we are conscious of. Peace of mind follows as a matter of course.

But to retain mental peace ever and all ways, the last remnant of craving, "the will to live", must be eliminated from the mind. The best and quickest way to

achieve this end is through perseverance in the regular practice of *right meditation* — the seed of freedom from the error of self-delusion and hence from unnecessary pain.

Right meditation or *vipassanākammatthāna* is the right method of mind culture towards the attainment of Enlightenment and *Nibbāna*. This kind of meditation is not accompanied by incantation (*bhāvanā*) and can be followed by all—whether he be an intellectual or an illiterate does not make any difference. The qualifications needed to start the various latent mental faculties to undergo their own natural processes towards the unfoldment of truth consist of a heart-felt conviction that there is a “common purpose of life” (*Nibbāna*) which all must ultimately fulfil and of an “intense desire” (incentive) to acquire enlightenment for the purpose of deliverance.

Monastic life is necessary for rapid progress towards deliverance from craving, the cause of repeated births; but as the method of salvation consists of and depends entirely on the training of the inner nature of one's own mind, to be brought about by one's self-control and effort, an earnest layman can advance further in the path than the monk who is wanting in self-control and energy.

The nine steps in *right meditation*¹, which, in former times, were withheld by most adepts, and would only reveal to pupils under probation, consist in contemplation and meditation on the following *dhamma*:

1. The *khandha*. The pupil is usually told that man is represented by and is composed of the *khandha* and that he has to go and find out for himself the individual

¹ See Appendix 3.

characteristics of each of the *khandha*. He may read about them, or contemplate on them, or meditate on the subject; but he must provide his teacher with the right solution to the problem: when form, feeling, cognition, impression and consciousness combine together, what do they finally give rise to?

2. The truth concerning becomings.
3. The truth about ultimate cessation.
4. The true meaning of confinement within the environs of danger and suffering.
5. The true meaning of punitive surroundings.
6. The real nature of contempt for the world.
7. The real nature of an attempted escape.
8. The truth that escape is not possible before one's own appointed hour.
9. The real nature of realistic awareness of being on the right path that prompts one to adhere fast to the Noble Eightfold Path as the way of life to enlightenment.

Usually the pupil is given three to four weeks' time to realise each of the steps. The main object is to re-awaken the mental awareness, which is considered as the real part of man, to re-manifest itself and be on the alert to guide consciousness and keep it from going astray, thus keeping the mind conscious of the supreme duty. This is only possible through perseverance in meditation, and it should be remembered that, before mental awareness can be successfully urged to re-manifest itself in full force, the mind has to be trained through right meditation to pass through the nine stages of "*realistic awareness*."

1. What man believes to be his "entity" or "ego", in truth, consists of only the *khandha*, which, when brought together in unison, give rise to impetus (energy), which, in turn, will have to undergo its own process of translating itself into motion as characterized by "movements." Hence, all *khandha* are but evolutionary movements or activities within the universe towards a common purpose—only "nāmarūpa" (*sammasana ñāna*).
2. What man believes to be his "unchanging identity" or "soul" is, in reality, only life-consciousness, which is common to all—an expression of the *khandha*. And life-consciousness, like everything else without exception, is nothing but a "becoming this becoming that, and ceasing to be this ceasing to be that"—truly "*anicca*" and a prey to "*dukkha*" (*udayabbayānupassanā ñāna*).
3. What man believes to be "eternal happy life in heaven" or "immortality in the Brahma world" is mere wishful thinking, for not only life-consciousness but all that there is in the universe, and the universe itself is no exception, must ultimately "cease to be." Hence all is *anattā*. There is really no abiding soul-principle in man. The subject will be aware, at this stage, that the darkness around him has turned into light (*bhagānupassanā ñāna*).
4. When the *khandha* unite together and give birth to man, it really is an indication that the most critical stage in evolution is on the verge of being reached by consciousness. It is the critical point of the mind, when

it chooses between darkness and light. It is the arrival of consciousness at the gate, on the boundary line between motion and stillness, which is surrounded by all kinds of dangerous obstacles, because it is guarded by passions and cravings for what man calls happiness. Contacts with those all tend to instigate the feelings to arouse emotions to induce consciousness to think, feel and act in defiance of the law of *kamma* and thus subject itself to untold misery. Hence the *khandha* is truly an aggregate of *dukkha* (*bhayatupattāna ñāna* and *adinavānupassanā ñāna*).

5. The "will to live" is the desire to re-possess the *khandha* which is, in truth, a liability—an exposure to punishments, because it is the main cause of repeated births and its endless train of sugar-coated ever-growing-sufferings. At this stage, the subject will be conscious, both during meditation and out of meditation, that a human skeleton (his own) is following and imitating him in every movement and will only disappear when his mind has entered into the next evolutionary stage (*nibbidānupassanā ñāna*).
6. All that which previously used to give one great pleasure has now lost all its charm, and the mind is now revolting, consciousness is being confronted by a continuous feeling of contempt for the world (*muccitakamyatā ñāna*).
7. The mind is so satiated with contemptuous thoughts for the world that it becomes restless and is full of plans and schemes. It is faced with the struggle to escape and run away from all, including this world,

which has now really become a world of fancies, make-belief and sufferings (*patisankhānupassanā ñāna*).

8. The mind has calmed down through the realisation that the present *khandha* are but the results of one's own doings, and that it is not possible to take leave of the body so long as the *kamma* that binds the component parts together has not spent itself (*sankhārupekkā ñāna*).
9. The mind has passed into that stage wherein that "unshakable self-determination" to subdue all obstruction, by keeping in a firm state of equanimity or indifference to everything, even to both good and evil for the purpose of non-soiling the immortal jewel, will begin to arise of its own accord, and this is known as *sacca-tang*. Whenever the mind attains to that state of equanimity or full serenity or *sacca-upekkā*, the subject will naturally become conscious that he is being internally and externally, bathed in light. He has reached the 9th stage, and is thoroughly self-convinced that he is on the "Right Path towards self-deliverance". He has completely mastered the whole teaching of the *visuddhi-magga* without having read a word of the written work. He has "entered the stream" and become a *sotāpanna* and can rest assured in his heart that he has to be born again, as a sentient being in the human form only seven more times before his supreme duty (*Nibbāna*) is fulfilled (*saccānulomika ñāna*).

Having passed through the 9th stage, the pupil now knows what right meditation really means, and that "self-

determination" of his will be put to severe tests for a certain period. If he survives the second probatory test and proves himself fit and worthy to be a recipient of higher wisdom, he will be permitted to remain with his teacher for a further period, during which he will be advised to exercise even more perseverance than he has ever done before in right meditation and report on further progress.

Whenever the subject, in his routine meditation, has attained to that state of exaltation wherein there is present in his mind nothing but "blankness and peace" (*nirodha*), because all sense-data have disappeared altogether at this stage, he will be told that he has now succeeded in raising his mental awareness above the *lokiya* or worldly plane into the *lokuttara* or cosmic plane, meaning that he has now secured the "pass" (*nirodha-samapatti*) to enter the Gate that will lead to the "cessation through wisdom", and he may now proceed along the "Path of Light" towards wisdom, enlightenment and *Nibbāna*.

Further progress will manifest itself by the subject becoming aware, while meditating, that there is a "spire of light" sprouting up from his front, indicating that he has reached the stage of *sakadāgāmi*, and will have to be born only once more into the human state.

The next natural development of the mind, after this, will become apparent whenever that spiral of light turns into a big cylindrical shape of a "steady stream of light" shooting vertically and infinitely upwards, showing that the subject has entered into the stage of *anāgāmi* and will, after death, not have to be born again, but will attain

to *Nibbāna* from the higher plane called "Pure Abodes" (*Suddhāvāsa*) because his remaining residual *kamma* is no more contaminated with that particular kind which needs a material body for manifestation.

To have reached this stage of *ānāgāmi* is to have attained to the highest stage of deliverance in which the guidance of a teacher can be of value. For the next and highest stage in the Noble Eightfold Path is Arahatsip, which is the stage wherein one has to travel alone.

"He who seeks refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, he who penetrates the Four Noble Truths—Sorrow, the Cause of Sorrow, the Transcending of Sorrow and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the End of Sorrow—he, indeed, is seeking refuge secure, he, indeed, is seeking refuge supreme. He shall be released from all sorrow."¹



¹ *Dhammapada*, XIV, 190, 191, 192.

CHAPTER VII

THE DOCTRINE OF ARIYASACCA

Through meditation, the Buddha realized that there is no "supreme will" in the universe as claimed by the Brahmans — no creator or personal first cause; but things and events must conform to the *law of paticcasamuppāda*, the natural law of becoming and passing away. It was the realisation of the truth that this universal law governs all things in the universe including the universe itself that led him to the discovery of the twelve *nidāna* (the twelve links of rebirth) and to the proclamation of the four *ariyasacca* or the four Noble Truths:

1. All existence involves suffering.
2. Desire is the cause of suffering, especially the desire for future existences.
3. The extinction of desire, therefore, will automatically end all suffering.
4. The way to the extinction of desire is the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Buddha made it plain to all his followers that he is neither a supreme god nor redeemer, but only a teacher and a living example of the truth of his teaching. Through countless lives, in various forms of existence passed on earth as well as in the heavens, he had pursued his own searching for a way of escape from the evils of

life; through suffering and opposition, he pressed on unwaveringly, until, at last, under the Bodhi Tree, he reached the solution to the problem of bringing this long and toilsome journey to an ending—the way of escape from the “wheel of rebirth” on which he had been whirling since time began—through the truth that existence ends in *Nibbāna*. He assured his disciples that all who sincerely and earnestly tread the Holy Path with a reverential attitude and inner determination could reach the goal as He had reached it, because each and every one of us has within himself the same latent mental faculties to do likewise, without having to undergo unnecessary sufferings as he had had to through ignorance of the natural processes of the human mind’s working.

The following quotations from the Tipitaka up to the end of the chapter are all taken from the “*The Word of the Buddha*.” They are translations of the Buddha’s own words from the Pāli text by the Mahathera Nyanatiloka of Ceylon.

“The Perfect One, Brothers, the Holy One, the Fully Enlightened One, at Isipatana in the deer park at Benares, has established the Supreme Kingdom of Truth, which none can overthrow—neither ascetic nor priest, nor heavenly being, nor evil spirit, nor god, nor anyone whosoever in all the world—by proclaiming, pointing out, making known, establishing, unveiling, explaining and making evident the Four Noble Truths.

“What are these Four Noble Truths? They are the Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering, the Noble Truth of the extinc-

tion of suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the extinction of suffering."¹

"And the Blessed One said: "As long, disciples, as the absolutely true knowledge and insight as regards these Four Noble Truths was not quite clear in me, so long was I not sure whether I had won to that supreme Enlightenment which is unsurpassed in all the world with its heavenly beings, evil spirits and gods, amongst all the hosts of ascetics and priests, heavenly beings and men. But as soon as the absolutely true knowledge and insight as regards these Four Noble Truths had become perfectly clear in me, there arose in me the assurance that I had won to that supreme enlightenment unsurpassed."²

"And I discovered that profound truth, so difficult to perceive, difficult to understand, tranquillising and sublime, which is not to be gained by mere reasoning and is visible only to the wise."

"The world however is given to pleasure, delighted with pleasure, enchanted with pleasure. Verily such beings will hardly understand the law of *paticcasamuppāda*. And incomprehensible to them will also be the end of all formations, the forsaking of every substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving, detachment, extinction, Nibbāna."

"Yet there are beings whose eyes are only a little covered with dust: they will understand the truth."³

Thus, to comprehend thoroughly the Four Noble Truths, right understanding of the law of *paticcasamuppāda*,

1 *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 141.

2 *Samyutta-Nikāya*, 54 (2).

3 *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 26.

is indispensable. Reference has already been made to Newton's third law of motion as being an offspring of the law of *kamma* and, in the same way, the law of *paticcasa-muppāda* may be considered as embracing all the three laws of Newton, which say:

- Law 1: Everybody continues in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line, except in so far as it be compelled by an externally impressed force to change that state.
- Law 2: The rate of change of momentum is proportional to the impressed force and takes place in the direction of the straight line in which the force acts.
- Law 3: To every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

These three laws of Newton concerning motion indeed form the basis on which rests the whole system of the science of dynamics, *in spite of the fact that no strictly formal proof, experimental or otherwise, can be given of these three laws*. And the real reason for this is that the conclusions drawn from them agree with our experience. That is to say, the whole theory of astronomy is based on the science of dynamics, and the results obtained and the predictions made from the theory of astronomy agree so well with the actual observed facts of astronomy that it is hardly conceivable that the original laws on which the subject is based should be erroneous. The Nautical Almanacs are published four years ahead; the motions of the moon and the planets are therein predicted, and the time and place of eclipses of the sun and moon foretold; the predictions contained in them are always correct.¹

¹ Loney, "Elements of Statics and Dynamics", fifteenth edition.

Scientific investigation is but the tracing of phenomenal manifestations or of whatever one is concerned with, either from causes to effects, or else from effect to causes for the purpose of better knowledge.

From this standpoint, the law of *paticcasamuppāda* may be regarded as "The Principle" on which all the various branches of science rest. For it tells us that everything in the universe that is conceivable by man cannot remain still, be it phenomena, matter or mind; it is movement of energy. It is always in motion and in a state of flux, because it has to undergo its own natural processes, some of which are cyclic, and thus gives rise to a chain of causes and effects, just as one ripple causes another, and so on. In other words, it tells us that nothing can originate without depending on something else previous to it, and at the same time, no originated thing can be conceived of which does not give rise to something else in its turn. There are clouds in the sky. It rains. After the rainfall, the road becomes slippery. The road becoming slippery, a man falls down. The man having fallen down becomes injured, and so on, and so on. Here, a shower of rain depends upon the clouds being in the sky; the road becoming slippery depends on the shower of the rain; the fall of the man depends upon the road becoming slippery; the injury of the man depends upon his fall, etc. And if there had been no clouds in the sky, it would not have rained; then the road would not have become slippery; the man would not have fallen down; and he would not have been injured.

The whole universe is governed by the law of *paticcasamuppāda*, and there is no place where this law

does not operate; not even in heaven where devas live, nor on earth where human beings inhabit, nor in hell, the place of torment where the evil actions of men and devas have produced unhappy beings that will only cease to exist whenever the activities of the evil *kamma* which bound them there are exhausted. The cosmos—earth, heaven and hell—is not eternal and always tends to construction and destruction. It is constantly in the course of change, a series of arising and disappearing, the beginning and the end of which are alike unfathomable because both are beyond the comprehension of the intellect. Men and gods form no exception to this universal law of becomings. The forces which constitute the self-consciousness of each sentient being must sooner or later undergo their own natural processes of dispersion and become all-pervading; and it is only through ignorance that such a being indulges in the dream that it is a separate and self-existing entity.

Thus, the Buddha declared that every man is subject to “change” (*anicca*). And as man is constantly, though imperceptibly, changing, he cannot remain always the same and has, therefore, no “permanent identity” (*anattā*). Consequently, if he should insist on holding on to the belief in the permanence of a soul or of the *khandha*, he would be going against the stream and become a prey to suffering (*dukkha*).

The belief in a permanent identity naturally leads to unsatiable desire in countless forms, such as lust, wealth, fame, happiness, etc. Passions, in turn, all tend to arouse into activity, jealousy, pride and prejudice, which will of their own accord give rise to oppression. Oppression, on

the other hand, will never fail to create ill-will, hatred and revenge, leading to quarrels and wars in the guise of self-defence and justice, bringing about killing and destruction, and ending finally in an increase of human miseries and sufferings.

Indeed, everyone of us is, all the time, being surrounded with suffering, because the earth we live on is whirling around its own axis as well as round the sun without cessation. Human sufferings are strictly unavoidable. First of all, just as the compressed buffers between two railway carriages push one carriage with a force exactly equal and opposite to that with which they push the other, every aggregate of *khandha*, that is to say every man, is subjected endlessly to the interplay of push and pull between the earth on which he lives and millions of other suns, planets and stars. Then, besides being exposed to the actions and reactions exerted by such countless invisible natural forces, we still exhibit obstinacy and prefer to remain under stresses and strains which are but the results of our own deeds motivated by our own will. For every movement—mental, verbal or physical—of man, whether intended or not, produces *kamma*, which is scientifically an exertion of force that will naturally be accompanied by an equal and opposite reaction, which in turn will gradually manifest itself either as stresses or strains or else as appropriate consequences expressible by the following: Be done by as you did. We are all shouldering burdens and sick and ill, at least at heart. Human illness has become so chronic that we sometimes forget to think about it; but it is a fact—a matter of

degree! For humanity's sake, however, the Buddha proclaimed the Four Noble Truths, so that when disillusionment comes our way and our will is set, each man can become his own physician and get rid of his long-drawn illness, which no other doctor can do for him. The Four Noble Truths may thus be compared to the four factors which medical science must inescapably depend on:

1. True knowledge or diagnostic of the disease,
2. True knowledge of the cause of the disease,
3. True knowledge that the disease is curable,
4. True knowledge of the ideal prescription to apply for gaining health and freeing oneself from the disease forever.

Those correspond exactly to the science of emancipation from all human miseries as propounded by the Buddha:

- (1) The Noble Truth of suffering,
- (2) The Noble Truth of the origin of suffering,
- (3) The Noble Truth of the extinction of suffering,
- (4) The Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the extinction of suffering.

The First Noble Truth — *dukkha-ariyasacca*

"Birth is suffering; decay is suffering; desire is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering; not to get what one desires is suffering; union with the unpleasant is suffering; separation from the pleasant is suffering; every craving that remains unsatisfied is suffering; in short the *khandha* or five aggregates of existence are suffering."¹

¹ *Digha-Nikāya*, 22.

A few moments' reflection is enough to make one realise the omnipresence of *dukkha*—the world-wide sufferings of all living beings (human or animal). This globe on which we live is, in fact, full of miseries: hunger, cold, heat, disappointments, losses, unrest, fighting, sickness and death are common to all. Yet, the majority of us human beings do not know what life is for. We only know that our material bodies make it possible for each man or woman to take part in the intellectual and material activities of civilisation as an individual. Indeed, we all owe our very existences to the linked-up activities of the millions of tiny living cells in our bodies already referred to. But we never bother, until the very last moment when it is often too late, to give thought to the fact that mankind, in reality, is the expression of the higher stage of life.

If we watch someone quietly sleeping, we may get a clue to one of the great facts of life. The activity which the higher living organisms all show and which distinguish them from inanimate objects, such as stones and even trees waving involuntarily in the breeze—all such movements cease in deep sleep; yet, if you watch carefully, you will see that movement remains constantly present—a gentle rising and falling of the chest known as breathing. So long as we remain alive, year in and year out, we breathe ceaselessly night and day. We have to breathe in air containing oxygen and to throw out the waste products of organic matter combustion, consisting of carbon dioxide gas. The burning takes place within the cell-structures of the body, in such manner that it produces no fire nor

flame, but gives us our body warmth. If it were not for the burning of portions of these cells constantly both day and night under the supervision of the subconscious mind, our bodies would become cold and all our vital processes would cease as they do in death. Apart from breathing, there is a faint throbbing at the side of the neck and also on the surface of the wrist where the doctor "counts your pulse." This throb is that of the heartbeat, which also goes on incessantly during the whole of our lives. It is therefore evident that our very existences depend on these two regular and rhythmic forms of motion—that of breathing and that of heart-beating, which are the basis of life. There are other internal movements which go on ceaselessly within us, but these two may serve as an illustration that life consists in motion.

Besides the muscular movements involved in breathing and heart-beating, there is a constant shifting of position to cast away suffering, although most of the movements are performed involuntarily. No one can really sit still, nor stand still, nor lie still, nor keep on walking or running for any length of time without undergoing suffering. For some or other of our muscles must move almost incessantly to relieve us of suffering. Even when one is sitting "still" so-called, there are flickerings of the eye-lids, going in and out of the nostrils, an occasional movement of the hands and feet, a shifting of the position. Whether walking, running, playing, turning the pages of our book, or whatever it may be, we are, all the time, unconsciously giving play to the muscles in our limbs and trunk—to alleviate accumulated suffering which we prefer

to call "tiredness" or fatigue. The only conclusion to be drawn from all this is that to live is but to struggle to keep up rhythmic movements.

Thus the Buddha says:

"How can you find delight and mirth,
Where there is burning without end?
In deepest darkness you are wrapped!
Why do you not seek for the light?"

"Look at this puppet here, well rigged,
A heap of many sores, piled up,
Diseased and full of greediness,
Unstable and impermanent!"

"Devoured by old age is this frame,
A prey of sickness, weak and frail;
To pieces breaks this putrid body,
All life must truly end in death."¹

"Did you never see in the world a man or a woman,
eighty, ninety, or a hundred years old, frail, crooked
as a gable-roof, bent down, supported on a staff,
with tottering steps, infirm, youth long since fled,
with broken teeth, grey and scanty hair, or bald-
headed, wrinkled, with blotched limbs? And did
the thought never come to you, that you also are
subject to decay, that you cannot escape it?"

"Did you never see in the world a man or a woman,
who, being sick, afflicted and grievously ill, and
wallowing in his own filth, was lifted up by some
people and put to bed by others? And did the
thought never come to you, that you also are
subject to disease, that you cannot escape it?"

¹ *Dhammapada*, 146-48.

"Did you never see in the world the corpse of a man or a woman, one or two or three days after death, swollen up, blue-black in colour, and full of corruption? And did the thought never come to you, that you also are subject to death, that you cannot escape it?"¹

"Which do you think is more, the flood of tears, which weeping and wailing you have shed upon this long way—hurrying and hastening through this round of rebirths, united to the undesired, separated from the desired—this or the water of the four oceans?

"Long time have you suffered the death of father and mother, of sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. And whilst you were thus suffering, you have verily shed more tears upon this long way, than there is water in the four oceans.

"Which do you think is more, the streams of blood that, through your being beheaded, have flowed upon this long way, or the waters in the four oceans?

"Many times have you been caught as dacoits or highway men or adulterers; and through your being beheaded, verily more blood has flowed upon this long way, than there is water in the four oceans.

"Inconceivable is the beginning of this "*samsāra*" (the wheel of existence), not to be discovered, a first beginning of beings, who, obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by cravings, are hurrying and hastening through this round of rebirths.

¹ *Anguttara-Nikāya*, III, 35.

"And thus have you long time undergone suffering, undergone torment, undergone misfortune and filled the graveyards full, verily long enough to be dissatisfied with every form of existence, long enough to turn away and free yourselves from them all."¹

The Second Noble Truth—Dukkha-samudaya-ariyasacca

"It is that craving (*tanhā*) which gives rise to fresh rebirth and, bound up with pleasure and lust, now here, now there, finds ever fresh delight."²

Indeed the cause of suffering is our own craving or desire (attachment to anything relative to self-concern). We feel miserable when we have to go to a dentist to have a tooth pulled out; but we remain quite cool when a stranger is about to have his tooth pulled out, simply because we are attached to our tooth and not to that of the stranger.

"There is the 'sensual craving' (*kāma-tanhā*), the 'craving for eternal existence' (*bhāva-tanhā*), and the 'craving for temporal happiness' (*vibhāva-tanhā*).

"But where does this craving arise and take root?"

"Wherever in the world there is the delightful and pleasurable, there this craving arises and takes root. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are delightful and pleasurable: there this craving arises and takes root. Forms, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily touches and ideas are delightful and pleasurable: there this craving arises and takes

¹ *Samyutta-Nikāya*, 14, 2.

² *Digha-Nikāya*, 22,

root. Consciousness, sense contact, the feeling born of sense contact, perception, will, desire, thinking and reflecting are delightful and pleasurable: there this craving arises and takes root."¹

"When perceiving a visible form, a sound, odour, taste, bodily contact or an idea in the mind: if the object is pleasant, one is attracted; and if unpleasant, one is repelled.

"Thus, whatever kind of 'feeling' (*vedanā*) one experiences—pleasant, unpleasant or indifferent—if one approves of and cherishes the feeling and clings to it, lust springs up; but lust for feelings means 'clinging to existence' (*upādāna*), and on clinging to existence depends the 'process of becoming' (*kāma-bhāva*), and on the process of becoming depends (future) 'birth' (*jāti*), and dependent on birth are 'decay and death' (*jāra-māraṇa*), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus arises the whole mass of sufferings."

"This is called the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering."²

"Verily, due to sensuous craving, conditioned through sensuous craving, impelled by sensuous craving, entirely moved by sensuous craving, kings fight with kings, princes with princes, priests with priests, citizens with citizens; the mother quarrels with the son, the son with the mother, the father with the son, the son with the father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. Thus given to dissension, quarrelling and fighting,

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 38.

they fall upon one another with fists, sticks or weapons. And thereby they suffer death or deadly pain.

“And further, due to sensuous craving, conditioned through sensuous craving, impelled by sensuous craving, entirely moved by sensuous craving, people break into houses, rob and plunder, pillage whole houses, commit highway robbery, seduce the wives of others. Then the rulers have such people caught and inflict on them various forms of punishment. And thereby they incur death or deadly pain. Now, this is the misery of sensuous craving, the heaping up of suffering in this present life, due to sensuous craving, conditioned through sensuous craving, caused by sensuous craving, entirely dependent on sensuous craving.

“And further, people take the evil way in deeds, the evil way in words, the evil way in thoughts; and by taking the evil way in deeds, words and thoughts, at the dissolution of the body, after death, they fall into a downward state of existence, a state of suffering, into perdition and the abyss of hell. But this is the misery of sensuous craving, the heaping up of suffering in the future life, due to sensuous craving, conditioned through sensuous craving, caused by sensuous craving, entirely dependent on sensuous craving.”¹

“For the owners of their deeds are the heirs of their deeds; their deeds are the womb from which they spring; with their deeds they are bound up; their deeds are their refuge. Whatever deeds they do—good or evil—of such they will be the heirs.”²

¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

² *Samyutta-Nikāya*, 35.

"And wherever the beings spring into existence, there their deeds will ripen; and wherever their deeds ripen, there they will earn the fruits of those deeds, be it in this life, or be it in the next life, or be it in any other future life."¹

"There will come a time, when the mighty ocean will dry up, vanish, and be no more. There will come a time, when the mighty earth will be devoured by fire, perish, and be no more. But yet there will be no end to the suffering of beings, who, obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by craving, are hurrying and hastening through this round of rebirths."²

The Third Noble Truth — dukkhanirōdha-ariyasacca

"What now is the Noble Truth of the extinction of suffering? It is the complete fading away and extinction of this craving, its forsaking and giving up, the liberation and detachment from it."

"But where may this craving vanish, where may it be extinguished? Wherever in the world there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this craving may vanish, there it may be extinguished."³

"Be it in the past, present or future: whosoever of the monks or priests regards the delightful and pleasurable things in the world as 'impermanent' (*anicca*), 'without an ego' (*anattā*) and 'miserable' (*dukkha*), as a disease and sorrow, it is he who overcomes the craving."⁴

¹ *Anguttara-Nikāya*, III, 33.

² *Sammyutta-Nikāya*, 21, 10.

³ *Digha-Nikāya*, 22.

⁴ *Sammyutta-Nikāya*, 12, 66.

"And released from sensual craving, released from the craving for existence, he does not return, does not enter again into existence."¹

"For, through the total fading away and extinction of 'craving' (*tanhā*), 'clinging to existence' (*upādāna*) is extinguished; through the extinction of the clinging to existence, the 'process of becoming' (*bhāva*) is extinguished; through the extinction of the process of becoming, 'rebirth' (*jāti*) is extinguished; and through the extinction of rebirth, 'decay and death', sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are extinguished. Thus comes about the extinction of this whole mass of suffering."

"Hence, the annihilation, cessation, and overcoming of bodily form, feeling, cognition, impression and consciousness; this is the extinction of suffering, the end of disease, the overcoming of old age and death."²

"This, truly, is the Peace, this is the highest, namely the end of all formations, the forsaking of every substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving, detachment, extinction, Nibbāna."

"Enraptured with lust, enraged with anger, blinded by delusion, overwhelmed, with mind ensnared, man aims at his own ruin, at the others' ruin, at the ruin of both parties, and he experiences mental pain and grief. But if lust, anger and delusion are given up, man aims at neither his own ruin, nor at others' ruin, nor at the ruin of both parties, and he experiences no mental pain and grief. This is

1 *Itivuttaka*, 96.

2 *Sammyutta-Nikāya*, 12.

Nibbāna immediate, visible in this life, inviting, attractive and comprehensible to the wise."¹

"The extinction of greed, the extinction of anger, the extinction of delusion: this, indeed, is called Nibbāna."²

"And for a disciple thus freed, in whose heart dwells peace, there is nothing to be added to what has been done, and naught more remains for him to do. Just as a rock of one solid mass remains unshaken by the wind, even so, neither forms, nor sounds, nor odours, nor tastes, nor contacts of any kind, neither the desired nor the undesired, can cause such a one (The Arahāt or Holy One) to waver. Steadfast is his mind, gained is deliverance."³

"And he who has considered all the contrasts on this earth and is no more disturbed by anything whatever in the world, the Peaceful One, freed from rage, from sorrow and from longing, he has passed beyond birth and decay."⁴

"Verily, there is a realm, where there is neither the solid, nor the fluid, neither heat nor motion, neither this world nor any other world, neither sun nor moon."

"This I call neither arising nor passing away, neither standing still, nor being born, nor dying. There is neither foot-hold, nor development, nor any basis. This is the end of suffering."⁵

1 *Anguttara-Nikāya*, III. 32.

2 *Ibid.*, III, 53.

3 *Ibid.*, VI, 55.

4 *Ibid.*, III, 32.

5 *Udāna*, VIII, 1.

"There is an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed. If there were not this unborn, this unoriginated, this uncreated, this unformed, escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed, would not be possible.

"But since there is an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there is escape possible from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed."¹

"Verily, because beings, obstructed by 'ignorance' (*avijjā*) and ensnared by 'craving' (*tanhā*), now here, now there, seek ever fresh delight, therefore it comes to ever fresh rebirth."²

"And the action (*kamma*) that is done out of greed, anger and delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*), that springs from them, has its source and origin there: this action ripens, wherever one is reborn; and wherever this action ripens, one experiences the fruit (reaction) of the action, be it in this life, or the next life, or in some future life."³

"However, through the fading away of ignorance, through the arising of wisdom, through the extinction of craving, no future rebirth takes place again."⁴

"For the actions, which are not done out of greed, anger and delusion, which have not sprung from them, which have not their source and origin there: such actions are, through the absence of greed, anger and delusion, abandoned, rooted out, like a palm tree torn out of the soil, destroyed, and not liable to spring up again."⁵

¹ *Ibid*, III, 3.

² *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 43.

³ *Anguttara-Nikāya*, III, 33.

⁴ *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 43.

⁵ *Anguttara-Nikāya*, III, 33.

"In this respect one may say rightly of me, that I teach annihilation, that I propound my doctrine for the purpose of annihilation, and that I herein train my disciples. For, certainly, I teach annihilation—the annihilation namely of greed, anger and delusion, as well as of the manifold evil and demeritorious things."¹

The Fourth Noble Truth—*dukkha-nirōdha-gāminī-patipadā-ariyasacca*

"It is the Noble Eightfold Path, the way that leads to the extinction of suffering, namely :

1. Right understanding (*sammā-ditthi*)
2. Right resolution (*sammā-sankappa*)
3. Right speech (*sammā-vācā*)
4. Right action (*sammā-kammanta*)
5. Right livelihood (*sammā-ājīvā*)
6. Right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)
7. Right mindedness (*sammā-sati*)
8. Right meditation (*sammā-samādhi*)

"This is the Middle Path which the Perfect One has found out, which makes one both 'to see and to know', which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna."

"Free from pain and torture is this path, free from groaning and suffering, it is the perfect path."²

"Truly, like this path, there is no other path to the purity of insight. If you follow this path, you will put an end to suffering."³

¹ *Ibid.*, VIII, 12.

² *Samyutta-Nikāya*, 56.

³ *Dhammapada*, XX, 274.

"Give ear then, for the immortal is found. I reveal, I set forth the Truth. As I reveal it to you, so act! And that supreme goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of good families go forth from home to the homeless state: this you will in no long time, in this very life, make known to yourself, realise and obtain it."¹

"But each one has to struggle for himself, the Perfect Ones have only pointed out the Way."²



1 *Majjhima-Nikāya*, 26.

2 *Dhammapada*, XX, 276.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

It should be evident to all who have carefully studied this book in a scientific frame of mind that *Buddha Dhamma* is an exposition of the truth concerning sentient life, its meaning and purpose and the laws that govern it, and also that the way of final liberation from suffering, as proclaimed by the Buddha, truly befits the dignity of man, because it is devoid of violence and compulsion in both its principle and practice and relies on one's own personal direct experience and not on anyone else's ideas or opinions.

The Noble Teaching is not, as some wrongly think it to be, "annihilation-belief" (*uccheda-ditthi*), which is the false view of extreme materialism, the belief in the existence of a soul-principle or "self" that is annihilated whenever death of the material body and of the thought processes arising from the body occurs, leaving no result at all of good and bad actions; neither is it "eternity-belief" (*sassata-ditthi*), the other extreme view held by most religions, the belief in the existence of a soul-principle which will continue everlastingly after death. It is, in fact, the "middle way" that does deny the existence of a soul-principle in an absolute sense (*paramatthasacca*), but not the existence of a personality in the conventional

sense not relating to any reality (*sammuti-sacca*), for it teaches a personality in the continuity of its changing consciousness conditioned by *kamma* or that life-generating force which links one life with the next and which, in turn, is produced by the individual himself through the delusion of selfhood. It is thus independent of a theistic creator and protector of the universe and capable of supplying the rationalistic explanations that modern mind demands to recognize spiritual and ethical values that are not at variance with the laws of probability and human experience and not in contradiction with scientific thought.

Similar to the teachings of all other religions, however, the *Dhamma* maintains that life is renewed after death and that the future life is dependent on the moral effects of what has been thought, said and done in this life, viz. the exercise of one's own free-will towards meritorious actions (*kusalā kamma*) leading to moral harmony and thus to good future life, or towards demeritorious actions (*akusalā kamma*) leading to moral discord and thus to painful future life. But it goes one step further; it teaches that life in heaven or in the Brahma worlds is not eternal bliss, but only temporary enjoyment of the results of good actions performed on earth. Nay, it teaches that one can prove this fact for oneself through relentless practice of *samatha* meditation, whereby normal consciousness can be temporarily transcended and the "mental awareness" raised beyond the mundane sphere or the three-dimensional plane, so that it can "see and know" the phenomena from an entirely different plane incomprehensible to ordinary senses.

The outstanding characteristic of the Noble Teaching is that it is not established on a superstitious foundation; it rests on basic principles or fundamental laws that are universally valid. It is therefore not liable to "change" and fall off in dignity as scientific theories are and is, in truth, *akālika*, i. e. capable of holding its own at all times. All recent discoveries of modern science in the fields of nuclear physics, astronomy, biology, physiology etc., have apparently established beyond question the Buddha's supramundane insight and omniscience.

The discovery of unimaginable energy locked up within the atom has confirmed that the more minute the particle, the more power is concealed therein; whilst the knowledge gained through observation of the sky with the present-day giant telescopes has pointed to the reality that there are more than one galaxy in space and that the ordinary six senses can never penetrate the noumena, even with the most ingenious precision instrument man could ever devise, because the universe itself appears to be an expanding universe. The genesis and biological development of life on this planet as described by modern scientists are also to be found recorded in the *Tipitaka*.

All these facts tend to the conclusion that the unchanging nature of the *Dhamma* the Buddha left behind him will become more and more lucid and appealing to intelligent minds with every new growth of scientific knowledge. It is compatible with "modern reasoning" which means scientific facts, and is conducive to the welfare of all, because it enables one who reverently adopts it to maintain not only mental peace in his pursuit of

reasonable material gain for his own comfort and worldly happiness, but also spiritual harmony with the universal laws of life, until he ultimately succeeds in achieving his supreme duty through his own exertion and consequently is forever liberated from renewed existence and its train of sufferings (*dukkha*).

The real gist of *Buddha Dhamma* is that mankind is the main stage in the process of spiritual evolution towards a common purpose, *Nibbāna*, and that the universal laws of *paticcasamuppāda* and *kamma* govern and guide him along that path. That is to say, man, being an integral part of the universe, is relative and transitory and cannot therefore ever remain the same. He is subject to continual change, in both mind and body and is thus bound up with impermanence (*anicca*). Consequently, so long as he craves for and clings to eternal individual life and continues to defy the universal laws of life by identifying his thoughts, words and deeds with self-hood, he shall have to endure endless suffering associated with repeated birth and death (*dukkha*), until he realizes for himself that he is without intrinsic reality (*anattā*) and decides voluntarily to tread the way to *Nibbāna* and thus put an end to this continual round of sorrow. Hence, it is everyone's immediate task to begin to effect one's own spiritual emancipation, which is no divine gift of grace but the conquest of one's own mind, rightly ruled and directed by oneself. And one can do that by no other means than those which the Buddha himself used to gain Enlightenment and *Nibbāna*, i.e. through treading the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the Path of purity as well as the Path of light, that will lead to ultimate liberation from suffering and to lasting true Peace.

In this light, the never-ending world's conflagration, the rapid succession of two world wars, resulting in misery and suffering for millions, the progress in the modern world of science and scientific methods of killing which have so filled men's minds with frightening thoughts of torturing death and fear of the unknown that the mental health of humanity as a whole is already endangered, all are the outcome of *ignorance of the truth that there is a common purpose of life*. It is because of this ignorance that man is chained to the fundamental delusion, *sakkāya-ditthi*—the attachment to "self", around which everything else revolves including the gratification of the senses without regard to the feelings of others weaker than himself. Not until craving is completely abandoned will man be forever freed from those individual internal conflicts brought about by incessant births.

Knowledge of the "first" cause will not make any one wiser. On the contrary, it is inimical to the advancement of knowledge and a hindrance to the purpose of life itself. The beginning of mankind is, in fact, inconceivable, because it is beyond the comprehension of man, beyond the scope of his intellect, and so is the end of mankind. No amount of idle speculation, discussion and arguments will ever bring man nearer to the truth concerning the "secrets of existence" that he silently seeks after.

The only way to solve the riddles of life is to contact the universal mind through the "inner-eye" "to see and to know", i.e. by means of "incantatory meditation" (*samatha-kammatthāna*). Wisdom (*paññā*) will only reveal itself to those in possession of ethical conduct (*sīla*) and

only in proportion to the determined effort and unbiassed attitude, "in the silence" (*samādhi*) of each individual. Right understanding of the law of *kamma* and the law of *paticcasamuppāda* is indispensable to rouse that incentive to right assertion into activity—to live a righteous life by avoiding and overcoming all inclinations and temptations to evil and by developing and maintaining the ability to enter into mental absorption (*samādhi*) at will, so that truth and nothing but truth shall continue to unfold itself.

Just as the examination of an X-ray film will reveal whether there really is a fracture in the bone or not, true knowledge of reality gained through visions, such as the visions of lives in heaven and in hell and visions concerning one's own previous births, etc., will unfailingly make human life really comprehensible which, previously, was unintelligible. For it will help us to realize that we have no divine right to change the course of our present fate which is the outcome of our previous deeds, but that it is within our power to build our future. It will also help to convince us that the consciousness of self is a delusion, bound up inextricably with ignorance and, therefore, with offence and finally with suffering, and that each new birth will leave us still ignorant and finite unless right endeavour is put forth in human life to loosen ourselves from the bondage of self. Nothing is eternal; the very cosmos itself is passing away; nothing is, everything becomes; all that we see and feel, bodily or mentally, of ourselves is but *anicca* (transitory), *anattā* (ego-less) and a prey to *dukkha* (suffering), and will pass away like everything else.

Man's life is comparable to the flame of a lamp in which a cotton wick is laid in oil, where the oil is taken

to represent the threefold cravings: unsatiable sensual desire, desire for existence, and the ever-mounting desire for wealth and power, prompted by greed, anger and delusion—the three great causes of never-ending unrest, turmoil and suffering among men the world over. One life is derived from another as one flame is lit at another; it is not the same flame, yet it would not have come into being without the other. And as the flame can only exist through refueling the lamp, so repetition of life or *khandha* or individual existence must depend on the threefold cravings. It follows therefore that if the refueling is discontinued, not only will the flame go out, but no new flame can be lighted again, and there will be no more birth into this world of sufferings. And thus there will arise within the mind hope for enduring Peace.

Many will maintain that the teaching abounds with gloomy views life. But gloom and pessimism are entirely foreign to a true Buddhist. For those who have trodden the Path with earnestness all agree that when a certain stage has been attained in the meditation part of the Teaching the most exhilarating experience is enjoyed even in the present life. It will, however, serve no useful purpose to argue whether man should try to make himself happy or not in this world of make-belief. It all depends upon the outlook on life. Life on earth is just what we make it, and it is far more natural to take a bright outlook than a pessimistic one. Each individual has the human right to pursue his way of life as he chooses. It is his own concern, not anyone else's; but his own reason being convinced of the existence of a common purpose, he should

not lose sight of his duty to "be good" and to "do right" by endeavouring with the utmost care, first, not to hurt any sentient being and, next, to help them all. He must also find time to be alone with himself regularly to try to fulfil his supreme duty and pave the way to enduring Peace through practice of right meditation (*vipassanā-kammatthāna*). For reverent perseverance in right meditation will gradually bring about "mental peace" which will, in turn, enable one "when time comes" to dispense with "the scanning of the horizon for a sign of salvation" like shipwrecked people in deadly peril in mid-ocean. Also, it will ultimately lead one, if not in his life then in a subsequent one, away from the restless tossing waves of the ocean of life, to the Rest and Peace of *Nibbāna*.

PEACE UNTO ALL

APPENDIX 1

SINGĀLOVĀDA SUTTA

According to the Thai version of the *Singālovāda Sutta* of the *Digha Nikāya*, it is said that the Buddha, while staying near Rajagriha in the Bamboo Grove, used to go out every morning seeking alms in Rajagriha. Early one morning as he entered the town, he saw Singāla, a householder's son, with wet garments, wet hair and clasped hands uplifted, worshipping the six quarters, the east, south, west and north, the nadir and the zenith. The Buddha, knowing that the practice was based on the old superstitious belief of averting evil, asked Singāla the reason why and received a reply to the effect that he did so to honour, to reverence and to hold sacred his father's last words. On being told that to protect oneself against misfortunes from the six directions according to the Noble Teaching one should not do it that way, Singāla respectfully requested the Buddha to show him the proper way to worship the six quarters. The Buddha then asked Singāla to give ear to his words:

“The lay disciple of the Noble Teaching, having abandoned the four evil actions, commits no more deeds that are based on four evil motives, and he refrains from the six ways of conduct that would bring about dissipation of wealth. Having thus avoided and overcome the 14 demeritorious deeds, he renders the six directions harmless and free of

all dangers and, in doing so, he, at the same time, disciplines himself for his own well-being in both worlds, this world and the next. On the dissolution of the body, after death, such disciple, who succeeds in disciplining himself, shall attain to happiness in heaven.

“What are those four evil actions successfully abandoned by the disciple? To destroy life of sentient beings, to take what is not given, to perform unchaste acts and to utter untruths. These are the four evil actions successfully abandoned by the disciple.

“The wise considers the destruction of life, stealing, telling lies and committing adultery as unpraiseworthy deeds bound up with grief and suffering and such deeds should thus be subdued.

“Now, on which four evil motives does he do no more evil deeds? One who is obsessed with wrong views can commit evil deeds from motives of partiality, enmity, stupidity and fear; but the noble disciple, having overcome wrong views, is devoid of those four evil motives and hence commits no more evil deeds that are based on those evil motives.

“He who transgresses the Dhamma or the laws of righteousness through self-indulgence, hate, fear or self-delusion, obliterates his own good name and honour as the waning moon; but he who defies not the Dhamma through self-indulgence, hate, fear or self-delusion adds to his good name and honour just as the waxing moon increases its size.

“And which are the six ways of conduct that would bring about dissipation of wealth? Addiction to intoxicants, stupidity, haunting the streets at unseemly hours, haunting amusement places,

infatuation to gambling, association with bad company and the habit of idleness.

"The following, young householder, are the six dangerous outcomes of incautiousness derived from being addicted to intoxicating drinks: loss of wealth, increase of quarrels, susceptibility to disease, loss of prestige, capability of indecent exposure and impaired intelligence.

"Six, young householder, are the perils from frequenting the streets at unseemly hours: he places his own person in unsafe surroundings, he does not take proper care of his wife by leaving her unprotected, he leaves his property unguarded, he is liable to be despised by others, he lays himself open to false rumours and accusation against himself and he simply goes out to court grief and suffering.

"Six, young householder, are the mental forms of uneasiness arising from habitual visits to places of entertainment: he is being haunted by the desire to find out and visit the places where there is dancing, where there is singing, where there is music, where there is recitative, where there is hand-clapping merriment and where there is drum-beating festival.

"Six, young householder, are the evil outcomes of being infatuated with gambling: as winner, he begets hatred; as loser, he mourns his loss; he becomes a waster of wealth—a fact known to himself; his word has no weight in a court of law; he is liable to be distrusted by friends, and his chance of marriage is affected because a gambler, according to popular opinion, usually cannot afford to properly maintain a wife:

"Six, young householder, are the unwanted characters that derive from keeping company with

six kinds of bad friends: a gambler, a licentious person, a tippler, a cheat, a swindler and a mischief-maker.

"Six, young householder, are the undesirable habits of idleness: he says, it is too cold, and does not work; he says, it is too hot, and does not work; he says, it is too early, and postpones the work; he says, it is too late, and puts off the work; he says, I am too hungry and does not work; he says, I am too full, and does not work. When he is full of excuses and leaves what should be done undone, he gains no new wealth, and the wealth already acquired dwindles away.

"Some friends are bottle-comrades, some profess friendship by words of mouth; but the one who proves himself a friend in the hour of need, he truly is a friend indeed.

"Six are the causes of ruin to a man's happiness: sleeping after the sun has risen, adultery, vengeance, indulgence in worthless undertakings, bad friends and stinginess; and he, who keeps company with bad friends, friends who possess evil conduct, friends who frequent evil places, does fall to woeful ruin in both worlds, this world and the world to come.

"Dicing and women, intoxicating drink, dance and song, sleeping by day and prowling around at night, making friends with wicked men and hardness of heart are the six hindrances to man's progress. So he, who gambles with dice, drinks strong drinks, goes to women dear as life to other men, befriends only base men and not the enlightened minds, causes his own good name and honour to fade away as the waning moon.

"Anyone who is addicted to strong drink, is poor, is jobless, is without earnings and yet is

always drunk, he sinks in debt as a stone sinks in water, into desperation, and anyone, who sleeps regularly in the day time, hates to get up from sleep at night time and is yet always drunk, he is incapable of maintaining a house.

"All young men, who shirk work saying it is too cold, it is too hot, it is too late to start work, let good opportunities pass by; but he, who dreads the wild growth of weed more than cold and heat and always does his duty, shall not miss the taste of happiness.

"O! Householder, know that rapacious persons, men of words not deeds, the flatterers and the fellow-wasters are not real friends, just men in the likeness of friends.

"Of these the first category, rapacious men in the likeness of friends, consists of four: persons who take all but give none, persons who give little but expect much return, persons who perform friendly duties out of fear of being involved and exposed, and persons intent on acquiring personal gain only.

"The second category, men of words not deeds, comprises persons who profess friendship by reminding one of past happenings, persons who offer friendship by persuading one to consider only the gain that would accrue thereby, persons who offer only aid that is not needed and persons who profess disability whenever the opportunity for service has arisen.

"The third category, the flatterers, are persons who give consent to wrong-doings, persons who discourage one in doing right, persons who praise one in one's face and persons who speak ill of one to others.

"The fourth category, the fellow-wasters, are persons who induce one to indulge in strong drink, persons who always offer companionship to frequent the streets at untimely hours, persons who always offer companionship to places of entertainment and persons who offer companionship in gambling.

"The wise, knowing the characteristics of those four categories of men in the likeness of friends—men who are ever seeking what to take, men who pour out words only and not deeds, men who are flatterers and men who are ever-ready to lead one to ruin—, avoid contact with them as one would avoid taking to a dangerous road.

"But, young householder, there are four kinds of friends sound at heart: friends who always give a helping hand, friends who stick to one in happiness and adversity, friends who always give good counsel and friends who always sympathise.

"The friend who always helps is sound at heart because he protects you when you are off your guard, guards your property when you are careless, is a refuge to you when you are in danger and when need arises to perform tasks provides double of what you may need.

"The friend who sticks to you in happiness and adversity is sound at heart because he tells you his secrets, guards your secrets, does not forsake you in time of trouble and sacrifices even his life for your sake.

"The friend who always gives counsel is sound at heart because he restrains you from wrongdoing, incites you to do what is right, informs you of what you had not heard before and reveals to you the way to heaven.

"The friend who always sympathises is sound at heart because he does not rejoice over your misfortune, but rejoices over your prosperity. He dissuades others from speaking ill of you and commends others who speak well of you.

"The wise, knowing which of his friends belong to the four categories of friends sound at heart, should find time to be near them and put his trust in them as would a son in his mother, and by so doing he will become a man of moral worth and like a fire he will radiate light to all around him.

"When wealth is amassed a little at a time like a bee gathering honey, it will grow in the same way as an ant-heap. And a layman, having so amassed his wealth, should divide it into four parts. He should spend one part on the necessities in life, invest two parts in business and keep in reserve one part for rainy days.

"And how, O young householder, does the lay-disciple of the Noble Teaching protect the six quarters? He knows that the best way to guard the six quarters and render them free of all dangers is by doing good deeds to men around him thus: to parents as the east, teachers as the south, wife as the west, friends and companions as the north, servants and workmen as the nadir, religious teachers and brahmins as the zenith.

"In five ways a child should minister to his parents as the eastern quarter: I will support my parents because they have supported me; I will perform duties incumbent on them; I will uphold the lineage and tradition of my parents; I will make myself worthy to be their heir; when they are gone, I will honour their memory and practise more alms-giving for their sake. The parents should show their love for him in five ways: they restrain him

from vice; they train him in virtue; they have him taught arts or sciences; they provide him with a suitable wife; they, in time, hand over to him his wealth and properties. Thus is the eastern quarter protected by him, the child, and made safe and secure.

“In five ways should pupils honour and respect their teachers as the southern quarter: by rising from their seats in salutation; by waiting upon them; by obediently carrying out instructions; by supplying their wants; by showing respect and attentiveness when receiving their teaching. The teachers should show their affection to their pupils in five ways: by giving them good advice; by giving them good training; by teaching them all they know in arts and sciences without holding anything back; by speaking well of them to their friends and companions; by guarding them from danger. Thus is the southern quarter protected by him, a pupil, and made safe and secure.

“In five ways should a husband cherish his wife as the western quarter: by treating her with respect; by treating her with kindness; by being faithful to her; by handing over household authority to her; by providing her with suitable ornaments and clothes. The wife should show her love and affection for her husband in five ways: by performing her household duties well; by being hospitable to kinsmen and friends of her husband; by being a chaste wife; by keeping good watch over everything brought home by her husband; by showing skill and diligence in all she has to do. Thus is the western quarter protected by him, a husband, and made safe and secure.

“In five ways should a friend minister to his companions as the northern quarter: by showing generosity; by courteous speech; by promoting their

interests; by treating them as his equals; by not betraying their trust. The companions should exhibit their attachment to him in five ways: by giving him protection when he is off his guard; by guarding his property when he is careless; by offering him a refuge when he is in danger; by adhering to him in his misfortune; by showing consideration for his family. Thus is the northern quarter protected by him, a friend, and made safe and secure.

"In five ways should a master provide for the welfare of his servants and employees: by assigning them work according to their ability; by providing them with proper food and wages; by tending them in sickness; by sharing with them unusual delicacies; by granting them leave at times. The dependents should show their affection to him in five ways: by rising before him; by retiring to rest after him; by being content with what is given them; by doing their work well and trying to improve it; by carrying about with them the praise that he deserves. Thus is the nadir protected by him, a master, and made safe and secure.

"In five ways should a layman minister to priests and brahmins as the zenith: by loving-kindness in act; by loving-kindness in words; by loving-kindness in thought; by keeping open house to them and giving them a ready welcome; by supplying their temporal needs. Those devoted to religion should exhibit loving-kindness to him in six ways: by restraining him from evil; by exhorting him to good; by feeling kindly towards him; by teaching him what he has not before heard; by enlightening him on what he has already heard; by showing him the way to heaven. Thus is the zenith protected by him, a layman, and made safe and secure.

"A householder, by doing such good deeds to men around him, shall preserve the six quarters in peace and free from danger.

"Anyone who thus practises virtuous acts is a wise man and deserves honour, for he pursues right social conduct and responsibility and makes himself gentle, humble, docile, diligent and thorough in carrying out his duties and unafraid of adversity. Being a helpmate he transforms all around him into his friends, listens to what they have to say and supplies them with good counsel and reasonable advice and thus deserves respect and honour.

"Liberality, courteous speech, unselfish life of service and appropriate kindness to each and all around one are indeed things that make the world go round just as the linch pin serves the rolling of chariots. If the world were to be without those four dhamma or righteous qualities, neither mother nor father would ever reap the honour and respect due to them by their children. The wise man who rightly appraises those qualities attains to eminence and wins men's praise."

"When the Buddha had thus spoken, Singāla exclaimed:

"Beautiful! O Lord, beautiful! The Exalted One has proclaimed the Noble Teaching in so many details, as if one were to turn up again that which had been placed face downward, or to lift up the cover that had kept its content hidden, or to point out the road to one who had lost his way, or to light up darkness with a lamp to enable all who have eyes to see! And I, even I, do go to the Exalted One, to the Dhamma and to the Sangha for refuge. May the Exalted One receive me as his lay disciple, as one who has taken his refuge in Him from this day forth as long as life endures."

IV. *Anguttara-Nikāya*. A classified collection in ascending order of texts relating to numerical rubrics. It is the longest book in the Tipitaka.

V. *Khuddaka-Nikāya*. A collection of all the texts which had not been included in the previous collections; it is further sub-divided into 15 books:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| (1) <i>Khuddaka-Pāṭha</i> | Short passages |
| (2) <i>Dhammapada</i> | Scriptural verses |
| (3) <i>Udāna</i> | 82 short lyrics |
| (4) <i>Iti-vuttaka</i> | 110 extracts beginning
"Thus it was spoken by
the Blessed One." |
| (5) <i>Sutta-Nipāṭa</i> | 70 didactic poems |
| (6) <i>Vimāna-vatthu</i> | on the celestial mansions |
| (7) <i>Peta-vatthu</i> | on disembodied spirits |
| (8) <i>Theragāthā</i> | poems by monks |
| (9) <i>Therīgāthā</i> | poems by nuns |
| (10) <i>Jātaka</i> | 550 birth stories |
| (11) <i>Niddesa</i> | commentary ascribed to
Sāriputta |
| (12) <i>Patisambhidāmagga</i> | on the powers of intuitive
insight of Arahants |
| (13) <i>Apadāna</i> | Stories about Arahants |
| (14) <i>Buddhavaṇsa</i> | Short lives of the 24
preceding Buddhas and
of Gotama, the historical
Buddha |
| (15) <i>Cariyā-Pitaka</i> | Short poetical versions
of some jātaka stories. |

The *Vinaya Pitaka* is divided into three parts :

- I. *Khandhaka* which contains a detailed code of rules to be observed by monks and nuns, and which is further sub-divided into :

- (1) *Mahavagga*

- (2) *Cullavagga*

- II. *Sutta Vibbanga*, a tabulated enumeration of offences and regulations pertaining to them. It is further sub-divided into :

- (1) *Pātimokkha*

- (2) *Commentary on pātimokkha*

- III. *Parivara-patha*, a summary of other books.

The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* is divided into seven parts :

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| I. <i>Dhamma Sangani</i> | on the qualities of the mind |
| II. <i>Vibbanga</i> | 18 treatises of various contents |
| III. <i>Dhatukāthā</i> | on the correlations of character |
| IV. <i>Puggala Pannatti</i> | explanation of common personal qualities |
| V. <i>Kathā Vatthu</i> | on controverted points |
| VI. <i>Yamaka</i> | on apparent contradictions |
| VII. <i>Patthana</i> | on the causes of existence. |

APPENDIX 3

KATHĀ

To a pious Buddhist it seems irreverent just to enter into Right Meditation, or attempt to do so, or even to go to sleep at night time, without observing preliminaries which consist in the utterances of the following *Kathā* (Pali Verses), or recalling to mind their meanings (especially in the case of those who find it difficult to memorise the Pali Verses). This is to get oneself, before commencing to meditate or going to sleep after the day's work, into a grateful attitude towards :

- (1) the three former Buddhas (*Buddha Kakucandha*, *Buddha Konāgamana* and *Buddha Kassapa*) for having "pointed out the way" to fellow sentient beings in times gone by;
- (2) the historical Buddha (*Buddha Gotama*) for having re-established *Buddha Dhamma* on earth;
- (3) every Buddha who has appeared on earth and proclaimed the "way" to end suffering;
- (4) *Buddha Dhamma* as preached by every Buddha for its peerless guidance;
- (5) the Holy Disciples of the Noble Teaching for having demonstrated the truth of the Noble Eightfold Path;

(6) one's mother and father.

- (1) *Araham sammāsambuddho bhagavā Buddham
bhagavantam abhivādemi.
Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo Dhammam namassāmi.
Supatipanno bhagavato sāvakasangkho Sangham
namāmi.*

meaning :

To the Exalted One who was freed from all bondage,
fully Enlightened, the acknowledged
Teacher, Buddha *Buddham*, I respectfully
raise my hands in salutation.

To the Blessed One who proclaimed the immortal
Dhamma, Buddha *Dhammam*, I gratefully
offer my respect.

To the Lord who founded the 'Sangha' Order,
Buddha *Sangham*, my respectful salutation.

- (2) *Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.
Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.*

meaning :

I deliberately, with devout affection, pay homage
and do reverence to the Exalted One, already freed
from all bondage—the "Self-Enlightened One."
To be repeated three times.

*Buddham saranam gacchāmi
Dhammam saranam gacchāmi
Sangham saranam gacchāmi*

*Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchāmi
Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchāmi
Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchāmi*

*Tatīyampi Buddham saranam gacchāmi
Tatīyampi Dhammam saranam gacchāmi
Tatīyampi Sangham saranam gacchāmi*

meaning:

I put my trust in the *Buddha*
 I put my trust in His *Dhamma*
 I put my trust in His *Sangha*
 For the second time, I put my trust in the *Buddha*
 For the second time, I put my trust in His *Dhamma*
 For the second time, I put my trust in His *Sangha*
 For the third time, I put my trust in the *Buddha*
 For the third time, I put my trust in his *Dhamma*
 For the third time, I put my trust in his *Sangha*

- (3) *Iti pi so bhagavā araham sammāsambuddho
 vijjācarana sampanno sugato lokavidū
 anuttaro purisadhammasārathī satthā
 devamanussānam buddho bhagavā ti*

meaning:

The Lord, the Exalted One, freed from all bondage, fully Enlightened, the Possessor of wisdom and power, who, having taken to the Right Path, realised the true nature of the universe and became the saviour of mankind, the Teacher of gods and men and the All Enlightened Buddha—the Greatest Teacher of all!

- (4) *Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sanditthiko akāliko
 ehipassiko opāyiko paccattam
 vedhitabho viññūhiti*

meaning:

The Dhamma, as proclaimed by the Blessed One, is the Truth which can be verified by all and which would bring to all its followers beneficial results, worthy as inducement to others to do likewise. And the wise who reverently practise it will themselves realise its true worth, for they shall know to what extent the practice of Dhamma has benefited them.

- (5) *Supatipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho,
 ujupatipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho,
 ñāyapatipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho,
 sāmīcipattipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho,
 yadidam cattāri purisa yugāni
 atthapurisapuggalā esa bhagavato sāvakasangho,
 āhuneyyo, pāhuneyyo,
 dakkhineyyo, anjalikaranīyo,
 anuttaram punnakkhetam lokassāti*

meaning :

The Disciples of the Lord Buddha who have attained to "Self-Enlightenment" (or Arahatsip), the Disciples of the Lord Buddha who have realised what freedom from bondage means (and become *Anāgāmi*), the Disciples of the Lord Buddha who have reached the last portal (or the stage of *Sakadāgāmi*), and the Disciples of the Lord Buddha who have "entered the stream" (and become *Sotāpanna*), are all on the Right Path. They are those, who have attained to one of the Four Stages of Enlightenment, and become merged with the "Noble Eightfold Path" itself. They are those who have put their trust in the Buddhas. They are worthy of devout affection. They are worthy of being welcomed. They are worthy of meritorious offerings. They are worthy of the highest respect. They are the upholders of the Doctrine of Righteousness and are likened to the world's most fertile seed-field in which the planted seeds of merit will germinate in no time,

- (6) *Katvāna kāye rudhiram*
Khīram yā snehapūrīta
Pāyetvā mam suvaddhesi
Vande tam mama mātaram

meaning:

I am truly grateful to thee, my mother, who, full of affection on me, fed me with your own blood and brought me up to this state to-day.

Dayāya paripunno va
Janako yo pitā mamam
Poseṣi vuddhim kāresi
Vande tam pitaram mama

meaning:

I am truly grateful to thee, my father, who full of affection for me, brought me up to this position to-day leaving undone nothing that you could do for me.

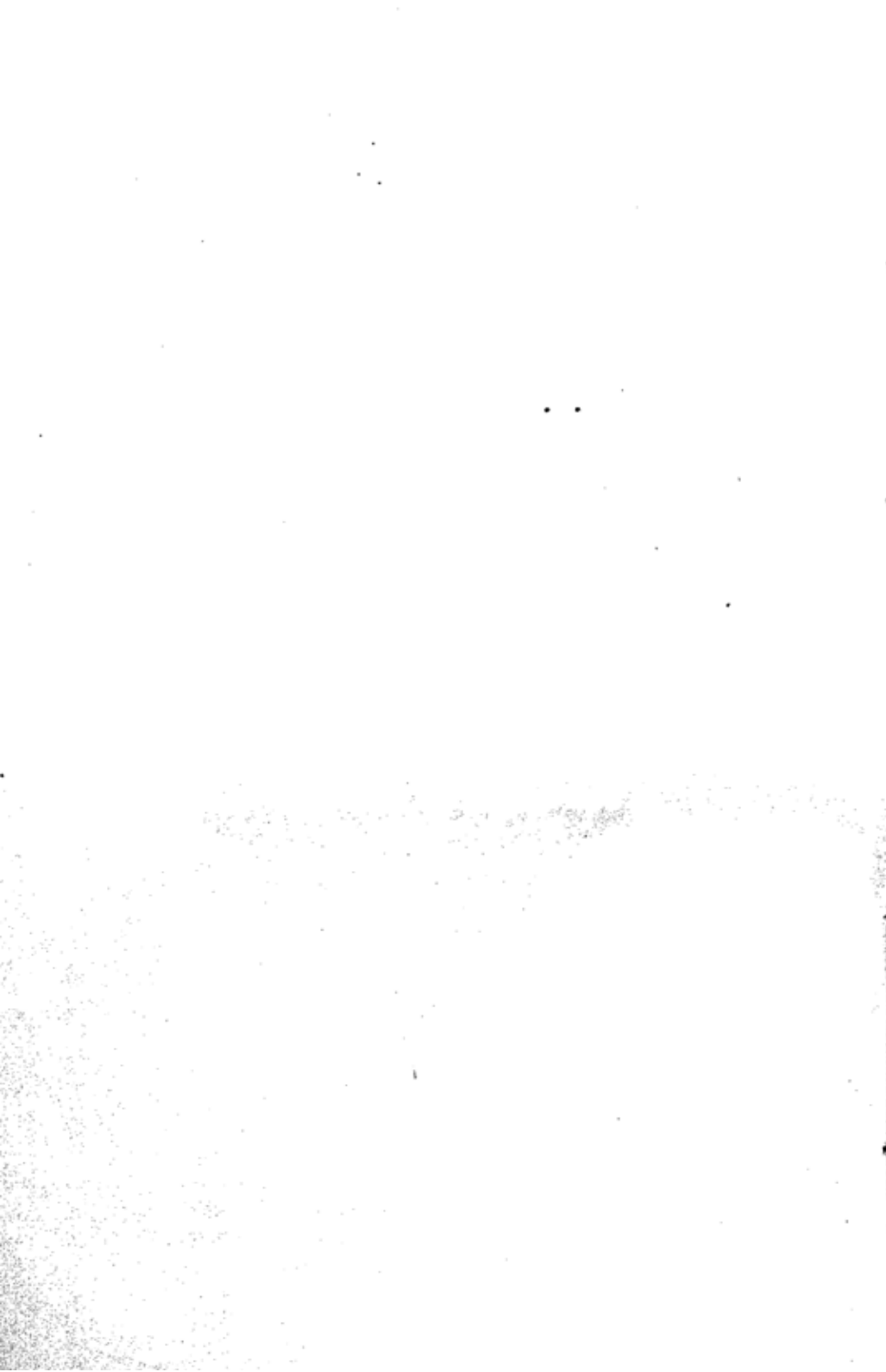
And after having observed the above preliminaries, it is usual to extend to all beings throughout the universe and in all directions: above, below, around and everywhere, thoughts of boundless loving-kindness (*mettā*) and to wish them all, whether friend or foe, happiness and freedom from sorrow:

Ye keci pāna bhūtatti
Tasā vā thāvarā vā anava sesā
Dighā vā ye mahantā vā
Majjhimā rassakānuka thūlā
Ditthā vā yeva additthā
Ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre
Bhūtā vā sambhavesi vā
Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukkhi tattā

meaning:

“May all living beings in the universe, wherever they may be and whatever their characteristics, whether they are still or in motion, whether they are long or short or of medium size, visible or invisible, near or distant, whether they are already born, are waiting to be born or in the process of being born—may they all dwell free from sorrow! May they all dwell free from suffering! And may they all be filled with happiness!”





INDEX

	Page
Abhiññā, the six supernormal faculties	159
Ānāgāmi, the third stage of holiness	181
Ānāpānasati meditation (Mahāvaravagga, Samyutta Nikāya) . .	151
Annihilation in the Buddha's own words	216
Anurakkhana-padhāna (the effort to maintain)	143
Arahat, the fourth stage of holiness	181
Ariyasacca, the Four Noble Truths	197
Bala, the five mental powers that make self-unfoldment possible	168
Belief in permanent identity finally leads to suffering	202
Bhāvanā-padhāna (the effort to develop)	143
Birth does not make one a Brahmin or an outcaste (Vasettha Sutta and Vasala Sutta)	7, 8
Bodhi-angā, the seven elements of enlightenment	177
Bodhipakkiya-dhamma, The doctrine of	115
Brahmajāla Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya	183
Brahminism and caste system	1
Buddha Dhamma, The gist of	221
Buddha Dhamma and eternity belief	218
Buddha Dhamma and annihilation-belief	218
Buddha Dhamma and other religions	219
Buddha Dhamma and science	220
Chattukka Nipāta, Anguttara Nikāya (within this fathom-long body, etc.)	7

	Page
Cittānupassanā-satipatthāna	129
“Cleanse the heart” with right effort	140
Common purpose in life and Nibbāna	185, 108
Conscious mind and sub-conscious mind	170-172
Consciousness is not identical with soul . . .	89
Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya (on the 14 diversities in life)	47
Dasama-sutta, Samyutta Nikāya (explaining rebirth starting from decay and death)	80
Dasa-samyojana, the ten fetters that bind man to the wheel of rebirth	111
Development of the human mind in terms of past, present and future existences	84
Dhamma, the gist of —	221
Dhamma-cakka-pavattana-sutta, The first discourse or resumé of all the Teachings of the Buddha	23
Dhammānupassanā-satipatthāna, Wisdom and power are omnipresent	137
Dhammapadatta, Dandavagg (on the death of Mogallāna)	51
Dhammapada verses 1 & 2 Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses)	130
Dhammapada verse 5 Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses)	41
Dhammapada verse 11 Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses)	117
Dhammapada verse 12 Yamaka Vagga (Twin Verses)	135
Dhammapada verses 20 and 86 Yamaka Vagga and Pandita Vagga (Twin Verses and The Wise)	140

	Page
Dhammapada verse 42 Citta Vagga (The Mind)	33
Dhammapada verse 69 Bāla Vagga (Fools)	36
Dhammapada verses 94-96 Arahanta Vagga (The Worthy)	182
Dhammapada verse 97 Arahanta Vagga (The Worthy)	177
Dhammapada verse 103 Sahassa Vagga (Thousands)	129
Dhammapada verse 121 Pāpa Vagga (Evil)	55
Dhammapada verse 127 Pāpa Vagga (Evil)	52
Dhammapada verses 141, 189, 285 Danda Vagga, Buddha Vagga, Magga Vagga (The Rod, The Enlightened One, The Way)	34
Dhammapada verse 145 Danda Vagga (The Rod or Punishment)	136
Dhammapada verses 146-148 Jārā Vagga (Old age)	207
Dhammapada verses 153, 154 Jārā Vagga (Old age)	18
Dhammapada verse 160 Atta Vagga (The Self)	10
Dhammapada verse 165 Atta Vagga (The Self)	9
Dhammapada verse 176 Loka Vagga (The World)	34
Dhammapada verse 178 Loka Vagga (The World)	181
Dhammapada verse 183 Buddha Vagga (The Buddha)	22
Dhammapada Verses 190, 191, 192 Buddha Vagga (The Buddha)	196
Dhammapada verse 201 Sukkha Vagga (Happiness)	113
Dhammapada verses 246, 247 Mala Vagga (Impurities or Taints)	67
Dhammapada verse 274 Magga Vagga (The Way or The Path)	58

	Page
Dhammapada verse 276 Magga Vagga (The Way or The Path)	58
Dhammapada verse 282 Magga Vagga (The Way or The Path)	113
Dhammapada verse 289 Magga Vagga (The Way or The Path)	67
Dhammapada verses 349 and 334 Tanhā Vagga (Craving)	32
Dhammapada verse 367 Bhikkhu Vagga (The Bhikkhu)	113
Dhammapada verses 371 and 373 Bhikkhu Vagga (The Bhikkhu)	162
Dhammapada verse 374 Bhikkhu Vagga (The Bhikkhu)	113
Dhammapada verse 379 Bhikkhu Vagga (The Bhikkhu)	124
Dhammapada verses 380 and 25 Bhikkhu Vagga and Appamāda Vagga (The Bhikkhu and Heedfulness)	32
Dhammapada verse 423 Brāhmaṇa Vagga (The Brāhmaṇa)	168
Doctrine of ariyasacca	197
Doctrine of ariyasacca in the Buddha's own words	198
Doctrine of bodhipakkiyadhamma	115
Doctrine of kamma	29
Doctrine of paticcasamuppāda	68, 201
Dukkha-ariyasacca, the first Noble Truth	204
Dukkha-nirodha-ariyasacca, the third Noble Truth	212
Dukkha-nirodha-gāmini-patipadā-ariyasacca, the fourth Noble Truth	216
Dukkha-samudaya-ariyasacca, the second Noble Truth	209

	Page
Effort to avoid (Samvara-padhāna)	142
Effort to develop (bhāvanā-padhāna)	143
Effort to maintain (anurakkana-padhāna)	143
Effort to overcome (pahāna-padhāna)	143
First Noble Truth - dukkha-ariyasacca	204
First Sutta or Discourse of the Buddha	23
Five aggregates of existence	85
Five aggregates of existence in the Buddha's own words	102
Five hindrances to meditation known as Nivarana	147
Five mayor precepts	66, 142, 189
Five mental powers that make self-unfoldment possible	168
Five mental qualities indispensable to self-unfoldment	162, 164, 173
Four bases for obtaining magical powers	158
Four doctrines taught by the Buddha	26
Fourfold aims of the Buddha in proclaiming the Noble Teaching	23
Four great right efforts	142
Four Noble Truths	197
Four Noble Truths and Medical science	204
Four Noble Truths in the Buddha's own words	198
Fourth Noble Truth - dukkha - nirodha - gāminī — padipadā - ariyasacca	216
How to contemplate on the body (Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta)	120

	Page
How to contemplate on the feelings (Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta)	128
How to contemmpate on thought consciousness (Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta)	136
How to contemplate on the three signs of being	105
Human life is the main stage in the universal process	106
Iddhipāda	145
Idle speculations and discussions can never solve the riddles of life	68
Indriya, the five mental qualities indispensable to self-unfoldment	162, 164, 173
Indriya-bala, the five mental powers that make self-unfoldment possible	168
Inner-eye to see and to know	163
Intuitive insight	172
Jhāna, the four stages of mental absorption	146
Kamma, a universal principle	37
Kamma, the law of —	36
Kamma, The doctrine of —	29
Kamma and dynamics	39
Kamma and vipāka	34
Kamma explains good and evil	45
Kamma is the conditioning agent of rebirth	41
Kamma solves the inequalities in life	45
Kammatthāna, Samatha	163
Kammatthāna, Vipassanā	178, 190

	Page
Kālāma Sutta, Anguttara Nikāya	20
Kathā (preliminaries to meditation)	240
Kayānupassanā-satipatthāna (contemplation on body)	119
Khandha or five aggregates of existence	85, 168
Khandha in the Buddha's own words	102
Khandha is singly and collectively impermanent	102
Khandhavaravagga, Samyutta - Nikāya (on the impermanence of mind and body)	90, 103
Law of kamma	36
Law of kamma as described by H. P. Blavatsky	36
Law of kamma and its validity	39
Law of kamma is applicable to all sentient life	45
Law of kamma is the fount of Newton's Third Law of Motion	39
Law of kamma scientifically expressed	46
Law of paticcasamuppāda	74
Life of Gotama, The Buddha	14
Light of Asia, Extracts from	38, 45, 54, 74, 79
Majjhima Nikāya 20 (on how to focus the mind on an object)	144
Majjhima Nikāya 22 (on the ego)	97
Majjhima Nikāya 70 (on right effort in the Buddha's own words)	145
Majjhima patipadā	8, 55
Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta - Digha Nikāya	119, 124, 129, 136
Man enjoys free - will within the working of his own kamma but he has no divine right	32

VIII

THE PATH OF LIGHT

	Page
Man is a self-created being and has to abide by the consequences of his own deeds	34
Man is only a "Body-dweller"	115
Mangala Sutta	11
Meditation, Ānāpāna-sati . . .	151
Meditation is the source of magic and revelation (iddhipāda)	145
Meditation, Precaution to take in—	162
Meditation, useful precaution to take before taking up —	146
Meditation, Samatha	163
Meditation, Vipassanā . . .	178, 180, 190
Meditation, Various objects of —	148
Meditation, what is meant by —	145, 160, 161
Method for visualizing past lives	165
Milinda, questions and answers between Milinda & Nāgasena	92
Middleway	55
Middleway, the treading of the —	58
Mind, conscious and subconscious	170-172
Mind control, Recommendable method of —	154
Mind, how to focus it on an object (Majjhima Nikāya 20)	144
Mind, special property of sub-consciousness	172
Newton's three laws of motion	200
Nibbāna and the common purpose in life	185, 108
Nibbāna in the Buddha's own words	214

	Page
Nibbāna, the highest goal of all beings	35
Nirodha samapatti	195
Nivarana or five hindrances to meditation	147
"Noble Eightfold Path" is "the" way of life	183
Noble Eightfold Path leads to enlightenment and Nibbāna	71
Noble Eightfold Path, Treading the —	58
Origin of the god concept	2
Pahāna - padhāna (the effort to overcome)	143
Pañca - sila, the five major precepts	66, 142, 189
Paticcasamuppāda, Doctrine of —	68, 201
Paticcasamuppāda, expressed as universal law	74
Questions and answers between Milinda and Nāgasena	92
Rebirth in the Buddha's own words	215
Right action (sammā - kammanta)	62
Right effort (sammā - vāyāma)	64, 72, 188
Right effort in the Buddha's own words (Majjhima Nikāya 70)	145
Right livelihood (sammā - ājiva)	63
Right meditation (sammā - samādhi)	65, 178, 190
Right meditation is the key to the riddle of life	108
Right meditation leads to four stages of holiness	180
Right mindedness (sammā - sati)	64
Right resolution (sammā - sankappa)	60, 186
Right speech (sammā - vācā)	61, 187

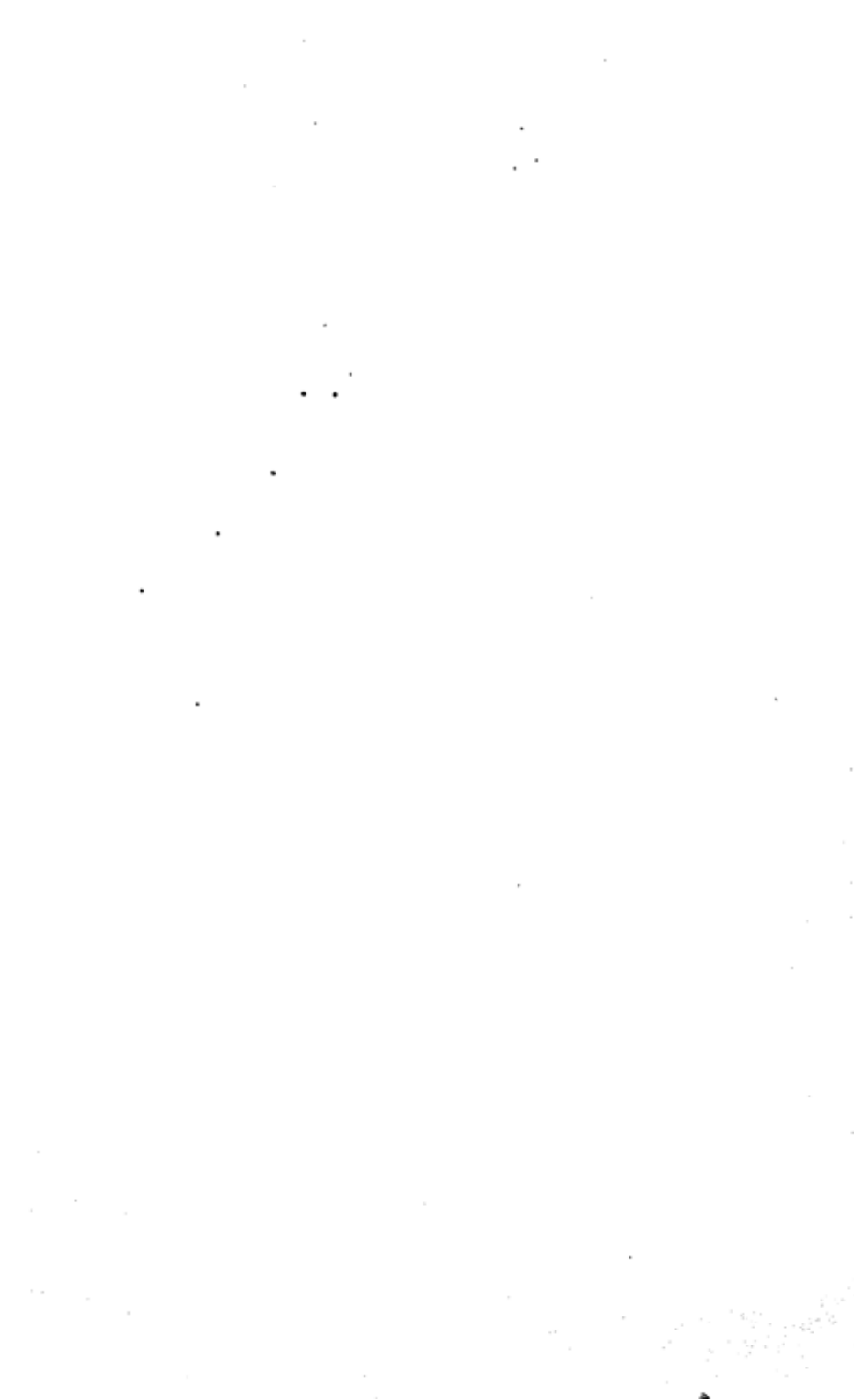
	Page
Right understanding (sammā - ditthi)	58, 184, 185
Sakadāgāmi (the second stage of holiness)	181
Samādhi, what is meant by —	145
Sammā - ājīva (right livelihood)	63
Sammā - ditthi (right understanding)	58, 184, 185
Sammā - kammanta (right action)	62
Sammappadhāna	140, 142
Sammā - samādhi (right meditation)	65, 178, 190
Sammā - sankappa (right resolution)	60, 186
Sammā - sati (right-mindedness)	64
Sammā - vācā (right speech)	61, 187
Sammā - vāyāma (right effort)	64, 72, 188,
Sattama Sutta, Anguttara Nikāya (Queen's Malika's question)	51
Sattatthana Sutta, Samyutta Nikāya (on the impermanence of khandha)	103
Samvara - padhāna (the effort to avoid)	142
Second Noble Truth (dukkhasamudaya - ariyasacca)	209
Self, ego and soul are all delusions	96
Self - indulgence and peace of mind are enemies	30
Senses are illusory (vedanānupassanā - satipatthāna)	124
Seven elements of enlightenment (bodhi - angā)	177, 178, 180
Singālovāda Sutta	226
Six supernormal faculties beyond those of ordinary man	159
Sotāpanna (the first stage of holiness)	180
Sub-conscious mind and conscious mind	170 - 172



	Page
Sub-conscious mind, special property of	172
Suffering of man or woman and its causes in the Buddha's own words	207, 208
Ten fetters (Dasa-samyojana)	111
Ten hindrances to meditation	146
Third Noble Truth (dukkha-nirodha-ariyasacca)	212
Thought is the "moulder of destiny" (cittānupassanā- satipatthāna)	129
Three laws of motion	200
Three truths	76
Tipitaka	236
Treading the Noble Eightfold Path	58
True peace and lasting happiness lie within and not without	54
Twelve Nidāna or wheel of rebirth	79
Udāna I. 4.	108
Udāna V. 47.	28
Udāna VIII. 17. (on Nibbāna)	73
Vedanānupassanā-satipatthāna (senses are illusory)	124
Vipāka, the fruits of man's deed	34
Vipassanā kammatthāna	178, 180, 190
Ways of life in India 1500-600 B. C.	1
Wheel of rebirth (the twelve Nidāna)	79
Why man is subject to rebirth	108
Wisdom and power are omnipresent (Dhammānupassanā-satipatthāna)	137



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